

BANDWAGON

July-August 1986



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This Month's Cover

Harry Atwell took this great photograph of the Cole Bros. steam calliope tailing the parade in Detroit during a July 16-19, 1935 stand.

This wagon was built by the Sullivan and Eagle company of Peru, Indiana for the Louella Forepaugh-Fish Wild West in 1903, and trouped for many years on Gollmar, Patterson and Christy before Adkins and Terrell purchased it for the Cole show. Circus World Museum collection.

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THE PRESIDENT COMMENTS

Secretary-Treasurer Johann Dahlinger reports that 106 members sent an additional amount with their dues to become sustaining and contributing members. This is a much higher number than in the past and their generosity has brought an extra \$1250 into the treasury. I thank them all. Among those who paid \$25 in dues were a number of *Bandwagon* authors, quite a few retired and active circus people, and many former CFA presidents. While the list of all contributors is simply too long to publish I do want to acknowledge twelve very special members who paid \$50 in dues: E.R. Britton, Gordon Brown, George Burr, William Duggan, Ray Gladfelter, Doug Holwadel, Larry Kent, Henry Maxfield, Henry Ringling North, Fred Pfening Jr., Richard J. Reynolds, and Stuart Thayer.

The effort to increase the membership is showing results as the large number of new members listed in this issue attests. The CFA very kindly included our new brochure and an application in their registration materials at their recent Kokomo convention.

Brochures and application are still available from Johann Dahlinger or myself.

The convention was well attended, and members appeared to enjoy themselves. While a full accounting of the event is not yet available, it seems virtually certain that the CHS did not lose money on the meeting. Elsewhere in this issue is a full convention report which contains the good news that the fourth annual circusiana auction cleared about \$2700.

The only negative news to report is that the number of members dropped for non-payment of dues was considerably higher than in the past. A second notice has been sent which should bring many of them back into the fold.

Fred Pfening III

1986 Circus Historical Society Convention

The 1986 Circus Historical Society convention began on July 9 as members spent the day on the Milwaukee lake front show grounds watching the set-up of the Carson and Barnes show in the morning, and the arrival of the Great Circus Train in the late afternoon. That evening the conventioners viewed films from the collections of Howard Tibbals, Dick Flint and the Circus World Museum including a number of very rare ones from the Ringling-Barnum show in the late 1920s and early 1930s.

The next morning the group was treated to an informative behind the scenes tour of the Carson and Barnes Circus conducted by Ernie Miller and Ted Bowman. After learning how the show functioned, the members attended the performance in the afternoon. Historical papers were presented at the evening session. Albert House began the proceedings with a history of the Beatty-Cole winter quarters in Deland, Florida. He was followed by Richard J. Reynolds who discussed the only okapi ever displayed on an American circus. John Polacsek then gave a paper on commercial endorsements by circuses and circus performers. Orin King's history of the James T. Johnson Circus was the finale. Some of these papers will appear in future issues of the *Bandwagon*.

On Thursday morning a group of Carson and Barnes personnel addressed the CHS. Pat White, Mary Eiler, Jesse Jessen, Charles Bellatti, and Ted Bowman all discussed their careers in the circus business, and shared their experiences. A similar session was held that afternoon as former Ringling-Barnum employees Evi Kelley Lentz, Barbara Woodcock, Bill Woodcock, Dr. J.Y. Henderson, Tex Copeland, and Lou Jacobs all told of their trouping with the Greatest Show on Earth. Needless to say, both presentations held the audience spellbound, and the members' questions led to many lively discussions.

The banquet was held at the Marc Plaza Hotel that evening with CHS president Fred Pfening III acting as master of ceremonies. Paul Ingrassia, president of the Circus World Museum, began the festivities by commenting on the progress the museum has made in the last two years. Merle Evans followed by relating some of his experiences in his long



One of the highlights of the convention was the discussion of life on the Ringling show by ex-Ringling troupers. Seated left to right are Tex Copeland, Barbara Woodcock, Dr. J.Y. Henderson, Evi Kelley Lentz, and Lou Jacobs. Standing (l. to r.) are Fred Pfening III and Bill Woodcock. Fred Pfening Jr. photo.

career as a band master. Vice-President Greg Parkinson then presented Lou Jacobs with a collage which will become a display at the Circus World Museum. The main event, however, was Bobby Gibbs, currently the giraffe and camel trainer at the Circus World Museum, whose hilarious tales of trouping by truck, train, and plane literally had the audience of 165 crying from laughter. After a break to allow sanity to return, the fourth annual CHS auction concluded the long day's activities. This hugely successful undertaking, which ran until 1:00 a.m., raised about \$2700 to benefit the organization.

Saturday morning began with a brunch in the Circus World Museum cookhouse tent followed by a discussion of the parade wagons by Chappie Fox. Fox led the group around the show grounds, telling the fascinating detective story of how he acquired the wagons for the Circus World Museum. In the afternoon, circus executives talked about the state of the business. Included in this group were D.R. Miller and Jim Judkins of Carson and Barnes Circus, Doug Holwadel of Clyde Beatty-Cole Bros. Circus, Allan Bloom of Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus, Allan Hill of Great American Circus, Al Stencell of Super Circus International, and Ray McMahon of Royal American Circus. The showmen concurred that animal rights groups, unethical phone promotion, and increased liability insurance costs were among the major challenges facing their shows. They also expressed concern with misleading articles in circus fan magazines, and with fans assisting circuses which engage in unsavory and unsafe business practices. Many members watched the tear down of the Carson and Barnes big top that night, as others took a second look at the old movies.

After three days of rain, the skies cleared just in time for the Great Circus Parade. The weather was beautiful on parade day, although a bit windy, as the convention goers watched the parade preparation in the morning, or staked out spots to watch and photograph the big march. The parade, of course, was as magnificent as ever with the Ringling Bros. giraffe den receiving the most favorable comments.

The convention's attendance was one of the largest in the organization's history. In spite of the full schedule, members still had ample time to jackpot or roam the parade grounds. It was a memorable meeting, emphasizing today's circus as well as yesterday's. Judging by the comments of the membership it was well received, and greatly enjoyed. Fred D. Pfening III

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KEN MAYNARD'S DIAMOND K WILD WEST SHOW 1936

By Fred D. Pfening, Jr.

During the late 1920s and 1930s the careers of many western film stars were intertwined with circuses. Most of the cowboy movie actors were in the twilight years of their film careers when the sawdust trail called. Jack Hoxie spent more years with circuses than any other movie cowboy appearing with the Miller Bros. 101 Ranch Wild West in 1929 and with Harley Sadler, Downie Bros., Lewis Bros. and finally with Mills Bros. in 1947. Buck Owens was with Robbins Bros. in 1930, then was featured by Downie, Lewis and Rogers Bros. in 1947. Buck Jones was a cowboy on the 101 Ranch in 1914 and the Julia Allen Wild West in 1915 prior to starting his film career. Tim McCoy was featured by the Ringling-Barnum show from 1935 to 1937 prior to operating his own wild west show for a few weeks in 1938. He returned to outdoor show business in the 1950s and 1960s to tour with the Carson & Barnes and Kelly-Miller circuses, and the Tommy Scott medicine show in the 1970s. Tom Mix at an early age also toured with the 101 Ranch and Dickey's Circle D Wild West then returned to the circus business in 1929 with Sells-Floto where he remained until 1931. Other film cowboys that were featured with circuses were Hoot Gibson, Buck Steele, Tom Tyler, Reb Russell, William Desmond, Harry Carey, The Lone Ranger, Hopalong Cassidy and Duncan [Cisco Kid] Renaldo.

The taste of outdoor show business was financially fatal to a number of the movie cowboys who fell victim to the temptation of operating their own show. Buck Jones, Tom Mix, Jack Hoxie, Buck Owens and Tim McCoy all took the plunge, most with little success. Only two of the shows lasted more than a few weeks. The Tom Mix Circus lasted

four years and Buck Owens completed one full season.

Ken Maynard, another of the super western film actors, started and finished his career appearing with circuses. He was born in Vevay, Indiana on July 21, 1895. At an early

Maynard was around twenty-five years of age when he appeared with Ringling-Barnum in the early 1920s.



Majestic Poster of Los Angeles designed and printed this portrait bill for the 1936 show. Wild west is in orange with the rest of the title in white on red. Joe Rettinger collection.

age his father bought him a horse which he quickly learned to ride. In his early teens he ran off with a couple of wagon shows, but was retrieved by his father and returned home. Maynard graduated from high school in Columbus, Indiana, and then attended Virginia Military Institute. At an early age he served as an apprentice on the King Ranch in Texas where he learned riding and roping. In 1913 at age 18 he joined out with the Kit Carson Buffalo Ranch West West where he perfected his riding and roping skills. On June 22, 1915 he signed a contract with the Ringling Bros. World's Greatest Shows. The contract called for him to do, "wild west trick riding, riding bucking horses, go in parade, spectacle, tournament." His pay was \$10 a week. In 1916 he was with the Hagenbeck-Wallace show, performing in the wild west concert. Maynard had a brilliant mind and began studying engineering books independent of additional formal schooling. At the outbreak of the World War I he worked with the engineers constructing Camp Knox, near Louisville, Kentucky. After this short stint away from the sawdust trail he returned to the Ringling-Barnum show around 1920, where he remained for a couple of years. Between seasons Maynard played the indoor rodeo circuit. In a Chicago rodeo in 1922 he was awarded a trophy as best all around cowboy.

Maynard received nationwide publicity after winning the award. After seeing the press accounts a director at Fox Studios contacted him and asked if he would like to be in pictures. Maynard signed with Fox, but finished the season with the circus. At the time Tom Mix was king of the Fox lot, with ten years experience in westerns. Charles "Buck" Jones was also making pictures for Fox at the time. Both Mix and Jones were well established in the motion picture business. Mix was responsible for getting Maynard a walk on part in "The Man Who Won," a film featuring Dustin Farnum that was made in August of 1923. Maynard's acting career was off to a slow start, although he did appear in minor rolls in several other Fox features and a number of one and two reelers. In 1924 when he was signed by William Randolph Hearst's Cosmopolitan Productions to appear with Marion Davies in "Janice Meredith," but his appearance in this film did not bring any other big offers.

Clifford S. Elfelt, a small independent producer, signed Maynard in 1924 for a series of eight westerns. His first starring role was in "\$50,000 Reward." Elfelt's films were distributed by Davis Distributing Division. Although the films were made on shoe string budgets they did provide exposure for Maynard's superb riding, roping and stunt work. The Davis company went broke and some of the Maynard films were not released. He was also not completely paid and was again nearly broke.

A big break came when he became

acquainted with Charles Rogers a producer at First National Studios. In 1926 he was signed by First National, where he made a total of 18 pictures. His motion picture career was in high gear and he was making big money. First National was purchased by Warner Bros. in 1927 and this was his first connection with a major studio. He fell into the Hollywood lifestyle and began to do some serious drinking. In 1929 he went to Universal Studios to be featured in four films. Unlike many of the silent film stars Maynard made a successful transition to talking pictures. He then made 11 pictures, one a month, for Tiffany-Tec-Art Studios starting in 1930. Eight pictures were produced starring Maynard at World Wide Films in 1932 and 1933. He returned to Universal in 1933 for 8 features. He worked for Mascot films in 1934 and Columbia studios in 1935 and 1936.

As Maynard grew into a major western star he developed a deep friendship with Tom Mix. Mix was featured with the Sells-Floto Circus from 1929 to 1931 and was highly paid by the show. Although Mix made about a dozen talking films, his movie career was really over, and in 1934 Mix was hired by the Sam B. Dill Circus. The title was changed to Sam B. Dill Circus and Tom Mix Round Up Days. At the end of the 1934 season Mix purchased the show from Dill. The Mix circus winter quarters was in Compton, California. With his long time interest in the circus Ken Maynard was very impressed with the growth and success of the Tom Mix Circus.

In the fall of 1935 Maynard began to think about returning to outdoor show business with his own wild west show. Around the first of January, 1936, Maynard announced his plans to frame a large wild west show to open in the spring of that year. Originally he planned a 30 or 40 car show. Harry B. Chipman was hired as assistant manager, Maynard taking the title of owner-manager himself.

A quarters was set up at the Metropolitan Air Port in Van Nuys, California, a location not too far from Maynard's ranch. Maynard noticed an ad in the January 18, 1936 *Billboard* with the headline "Railroad Circus For Sale Cheap." The ad listed a 15 car circus, parade wagons, light plants, all steel elephant, horse and box cars, calliopes, complete except for live stock. The seller was George W. Christy in South Houston, Texas. Other rail show equipment available at the time was the defunct Cole Bros. 1930 show, owned by the Venice Transportation Company in St. Louis, Missouri. Maynard went for the Christy plunder. [Interestingly George Christy had purchased the Cole show a few months later.] The February 16, 1936 *Billboard* told of the first equipment purchase from Christy. The article stated that 15 cars, 27 wagons and a complete menagerie and an elephant had been purchased. This report was exaggerated.

More detailed information about the Houston purchase trip was included in a letter written by Harry Chipman to James M. Beach on February 20, 1936. The letter read, "Ken and I flew from here [Hollywood] to South Houston in his plane, 1700 miles of bad weather and I was certainly glad to touch my



Late in January of 1936 Maynard went to Houston to purchase equipment from George W. Christy. Christy and Maynard posed in front of the Orchestmelochor wagon just before it was loaded.

feet upon the old terra firma once again.

"We bought 23 wagons, on the trip...I brought 15 cars of equipment back. Six 80 foot stocks and 9 flats. [The flats were system cars owned by the Southern Pacific.] At the present time I am laying out a new line of paper which is nearly all special. We are building all new canvas...arena is 36 foot larger than the one carried on the Buffalo Bill show and also Miller show. Menagerie top will be an 80 with five 40s...have nearly the complete show now, menagerie so far is 2 elephants (getting three more), camels, leopards, tigers, black and brown bears, herd of 10 buffalo, sacred cows, zebras, yaks, zebus, ostriches, 25

This studio photo of Maynard in makeup was used by the cowboy movie star in the 1930s.



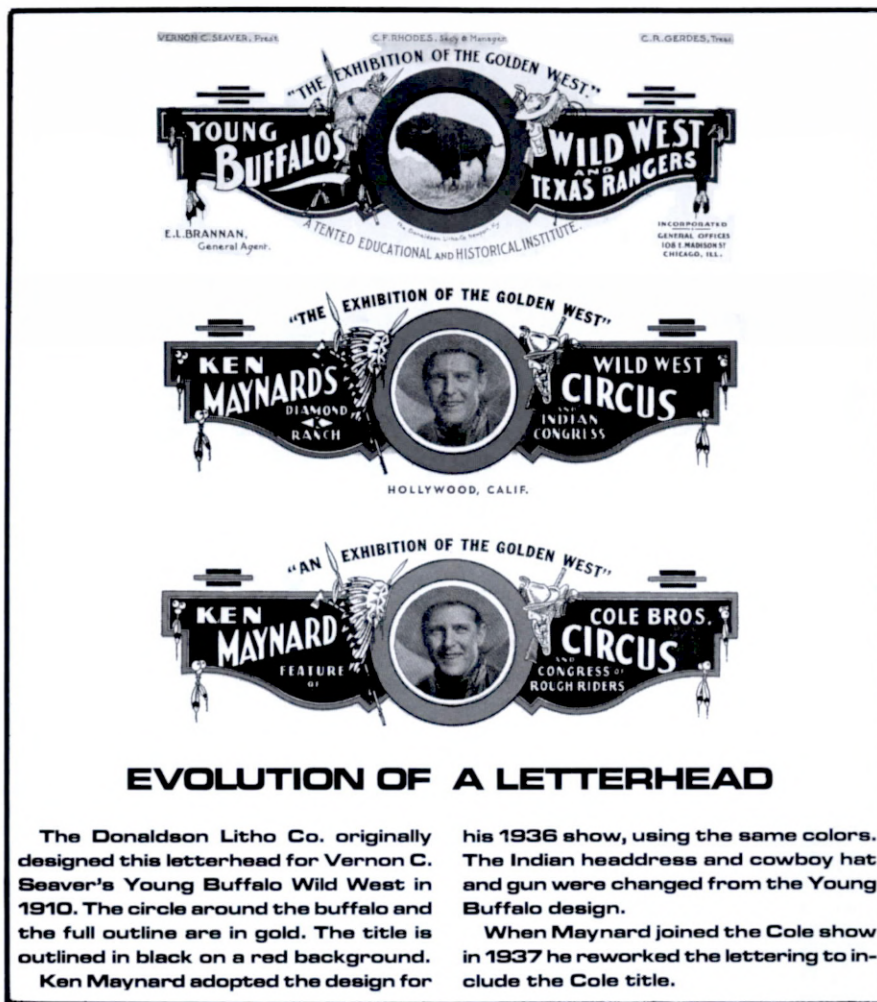
species of mandrills, apes, chackamaws, gorilla and a big den of five lions.

"Our parade stuff consists of 17 tableaus so far...including a steam calliope, two air calliopes (one with the band.) Spud Redrick will have the big show band. We have the Ringling's old Swan bandwagon, the old Buffalo Bill band [organ] wagon, two prairie schooners with six ups of brahma steers. An old stage coach...in fact it's the greatest wild west show...circus and Indian congress on earth. Will be a thirty car show. I bought a herd of the wildest bucking broncs you ever saw, the steers are due in today. One thing I will say for Maynard he certainly does every thing right and is a damn good showman. He doesn't know for sure as to weather the thing will troupe this year or next, but will give two days a week at the winter quarters on Saturday and Sunday to help defray the running expenses... until it does go out."

Chipman's letter was written on two color stationery with the title "Ken Maynard First National Western Star," but it was not long until the show was sporting an attractive new red, black and gold letterhead with Maynard's photo.

Most of the equipment purchased from Christy had been used earlier on Golden Bros. Circus in 1923 and 1924, then on Christy's second show, Lee Bros., in 1925 and 1926. By 1936 Jess Adkins and Zack Terrell had purchased much of the choice Christy equipment while framing their new Cole Bros. Circus the prior year.

A number of well-known wagons were left, however, and many old time shows were represented in the history of the wagons Maynard bought. Included were the Swan bandwagon built for Ringling Bros. and a tableau with large leaf scroll, built by Beggs for the J. H. Eschman Circus and used by them through the 1918 season. The Orchestmelchoir tableau built for Barnum in the 1870s, later used by 101 Ranch around 1910. The "Beauty" tableau, built for Barnum & London and later on Jones Bros. in 1915 and was another wagon purchased. The steam calliope was originally on Mugivan



and Bowers units starting in 1907, including Sanger and Howes Great London through 1920, Palmer Bros. in 1921, Mike Golden's Howes and Golden Bros. in 1922, 1923 and 1924. The well known "Whiskers" cage, originally built for Barnum & London in the 1880s, was also in the lot. Another was a tableau with three diamond shaped mirrors which had been used as the ticket wagon on the Golden show in 1923 and 1924, then on Lee Bros. in 1925 and 1926. There were also six additional cages, these were not fancy and were the standard Christy construction. The ticket wagon, the air calliope wagon, a tableau with three diamond shaped mirrors and few cages had come to Christy when he purchased the Golden Bros. Circus late in 1924. Ten baggage wagons completed the wagons coming from Houston.

In a March 14, 1982 letter to Fred D. Pfening III Harry Chipman related more about the trip to Texas and the dealings with George Christy. He wrote, "Ken and I flew in his open air taxi to Texas. I had previously worked out a deal with Christy (at a good price) but when we were at the Rice Hotel in Houston, Ken wouldn't listen to me and wanted to make his own deal, so he got a screwing. I let Ken come home in the plane by himself. Anyhow I brought some so-called "stock" cars and company [system] flats with all the old circus wagons on a home run move

to California I slept all the way in the crummy [caboose] with two extra men on the train, one to feed the stock and the other a wagon knocker. We looked for Ken in the yards when we pulled in and I was told that he had wrecked the plane and hadn't got home yet. I was the invisible manager until I got enough and joined Tom Mix in New York. I wanted to build the show, like the Mix show, but that was another time Maynard wouldn't listen to me. But in later years before he died I went to

Special paper was used to advertise the opening on May 2, 1936. Charlie Puck snapped this large billboard. Circus World Museum collection.



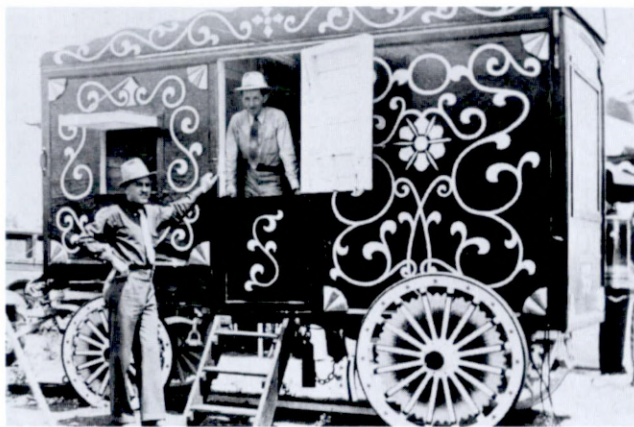
see him and he had tears in his eyes and and threw his arms around me and told another man present that 'this is my kid brother and if I had listened to him I wouldn't be broke today.' I was nine years younger than Ken and he always called me his kid brother. In fact at the time of the forming of the corporation he wanted to make me the third party and I reneged, as something told me to keep my name out of it. It is too bad, his ranch at Van Nuys Blvd. and Plummer, where we opened the show, would alone be worth a fortune today."

Starting in February articles appeared almost weekly in the *Billboard* concerning the activities at the Maynard winter quarters. This material was probably sent in by Chipman. In addition to some Christy animals Maynard purchased a lion and a bear from the Tom Mix show, as well as seventeen banners from Ted Metz, the Mix side show manager. New canvas purchased from Downie Bros. Inc. included a white wild west canopy 200 by 300 feet, a 20 by 80 foot side show top, an 80 foot menagerie top with two 40s, a 20 by 20 foot marquee, a 60 foot dressing tent with one 30, a 24 by 40 foot wardrobe tent, two red and white 12 by 14 candy tops, a 15 by 15 red and white grease joint top, 4 large and 2 small Indian teepees. From the Al G. Barnes Circus he bought two tigers, two zebras, two ostriches and two camels.

Maynard secured two elephants, Sally and Queenie, from Louis Goebel. Sally had been on Gentry Bros. Circus around 1927 and by 1930 she was on Sells-Floto and in 1934 was on Al G. Barnes. The elephant, along with six others, was left in the Barnes winter quarters in Baldwin Park when the show left for the 1935 tour. Sally and Queenie were used in the 1935 film "O'Shaughnessy's Boy," featuring Wallace Beery and Jackie Cooper. Goebel purchased Sally in 1935.

Queenie was purchased by the American Circus Corporation in 1923 and was on Hagenbeck-Wallace from 1925 to 1931. At some point in the early 1930s she was moved to the Barnes show, or just housed with other Ringling-Barnum owned elephants in the Baldwin Park quarters. Goebel also purchased her in 1935.

A business office was opened on Santa Monica Boulevard with Harry Chipman in charge, assisted by Marion Townsend. February press releases stated that the opening date had not been set due to Maynard's film contracts, and a photo of Ken



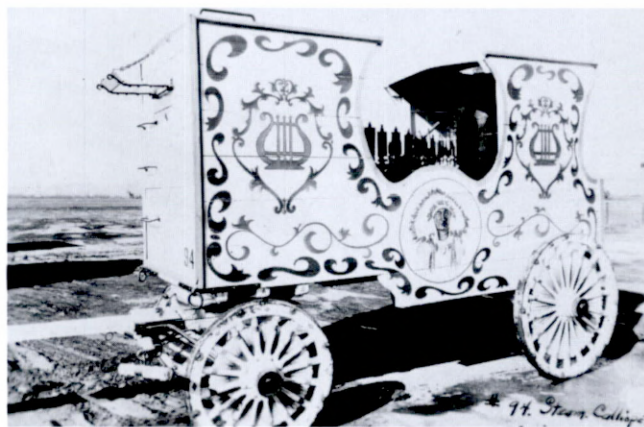
Harry Chipman posed in the doorway of the red ticket wagon on opening day.

Maynard and George Christy appeared in the *Billboard*.

The train load of equipment arrived from Houston on February 16 and Jack Goodrich and his crew began at once to rebuild the wagons. All new side show banners were ordered and it was announced that the banners purchased from Ted Metz were to be used for movie rentals. Twelve Brahma bulls and long horn steers arrived. John Agee was in quarters breaking a liberty horse act. Increased activity required the leasing of two additional hangers at the airport. Forty-nine lengths of 11 high starback reserved seats were built. Bill Penny arrived in April with a large group Indians. Joe Metcalfe was hired to take charge of the menagerie and elephants. Metcalfe was at once sent out with the two bulls on a movie location. His assistant Ctrly Phillips went to Yuma, Arizona on location with the camels and lead stock. A press report stated that three additional elephants were to be purchased. The Diamond K Circus Corporation was incorporated to operate the show.

Charles Redrick was signed as the band leader and Roger Bell and Helen Ayres were hired to play air calliopes. Harry Wills came to the show to play the steam calliope in parades. Doc Collins joined as side show manager, and T. K. McIntire was named as

Opposite the side show were the candy stands, red ticket wagon, and on the far left the Orchestmelochor which was used as second ticket wagon. Joe Rettinger collection.



The steam calliope wagon was attractively painted, but had no carvings.

manager of the advance. By the first of May Al Bennett was feeding eighty-seven people in the winter quarters cookhouse.

The building of the show was completed by mid April and it was decided to set the show up on the Maynard ranch and put on weekend performances. The original plan of going on the road in 1937 was not altered.

Maynard with ten cowboys and forty-five Indians appeared in the Los Angeles Police Circus on April 26. Joe Metcalfe and the elephants, as well as John Agee and the liberty act were also in the Police performance.

A *Billboard* article listed the management staff as follows: Harry B. Chipman, assistant manager; Mrs. Mary Maynard, treasurer; John Agee, equestrian director; Steve Henry, legal adjuster and director of public relations; Johnny Brosseau, general superintendent; Buck Moulton, in charge of front door; Louis Ringling, boss canvasman; Bob Cusson, concession manager; Jack Bennett, steward of cookhouse; Al Thomas, property boss; Jack Wheeler, press agent and Dan Dix, lot superintendent.

A red and white herald was published in advance of the May 2 opening. The bill stated that the show would exhibit at Van Nuys every Saturday and Sunday. A street parade was listed for opening day. Additionally a four page, two color, tabloid herald was used. The *Van Nuys News* issued a "circus special" on April 30, with a front page headline reading, "Ken Maynard's Great Circus Makes Initial Bow Saturday." A two-page inside spread carried a large paid advertisement for the show as well as a number of "best wishes" ads including a large one from the Tom Mix Circus. Smaller ads carried the names of

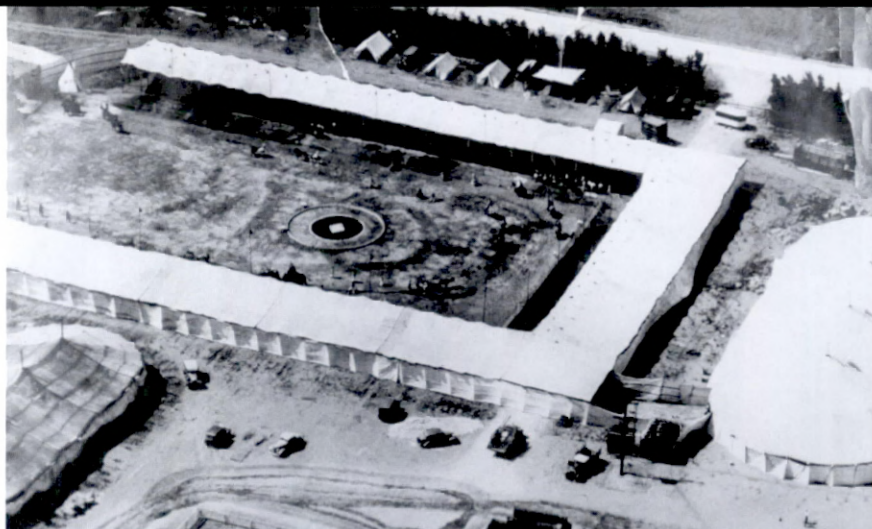
Walter M. Buckingham, Secretary-Treasurer of the CFA, Bert J. Chipman, father of Harry and Charles Bernard, seller of circuses. Special 25 cent children's tickets were distributed to schools in the area. The price of an adult reserved seat was ticket was \$1.10.

A twelve page program booklet, with a number of ads, was distributed free at the opening show. The performance was as follows:

1. Pageant of the Old West and Great Far East. Introduction of Ken Maynard and his horse Tarzan.
2. Russian Cossacks.
3. Quadrille on horseback with cowboys and cowgirls.
4. Trick roping, including the "big horse catch."
5. Sons of the Desert, in their sports and pastimes. Arabian tumblers and acrobats.
6. Elephants, presented by Anna Velte and Joe Metcalfe.
7. Trick riding.
8. Ken Maynard demonstrating marksmanship with rifle and pistols.
9. The Famous Jalisco Troupe.
10. Beautiful horses and beautiful girls in a presentation of equine intelligence.
11. Picturesque revival of the historical "Pony Express."
12. Indian Congress of full blooded Cheyennes and Arapahoes in tribal ceremonial and war dances.
13. Liberty horses presented by John Agee.
14. Bucking horses.
15. The Buffalo Hunt by Indian horsemen.
16. Historical revival of the stage coach and rescue from the Black Hills bandits.
17. Mexican Vaqueros.
18. The Battle of Wounded Knee, with the burning of the Prairie Schooner and the rescue of the pioneers from marauding Indians by a troupe of U. S. Cavalry.

The opening spec included a fourteen piece band, two covered wagons drawn by oxen, a stage coach with a four horse hitch, two elephants, an ostrich drawn sulky and all of the performing personnel including a large number of Indians. A standard circus ring was placed in the center of the arena and was used by the elephants and the liberty horse act presented by John Agee.

The May 16, 1936 issue of the *Billboard* told



This rare aerial view shows the canopy top with the grand entry in progress. The arena was 200 by 300 feet in size. The new 80 by 160 foot menagerie tent is on the right. The 60 by

150 foot dressing top is in the lower left. The horse corral of the Maynard ranch is at the bottom of the photo. Joe Rettinger collection.

of the opening of the show. The headline read, "Maynard offering outstanding wild west, circus performance." The article read as follows, "The opening of Ken Maynard's Diamond K Ranch Wild West, Circus and Indian Congress was a gala affair May 2. Weather was ideal and it appeared the whole San Fernando Valley turned out for the street parade and performances at the ranch. The ranch is located four miles from Van Nuys. Shows were also given the following day producing two big matinees and two fair night houses.

"Twenty-four acres of the ranch were used to stage the show. Around this area are clusters of multi-colored lights atop the ornamental fence, two arched entrances with names of the show in varicolored lights. At considerable expense, special lights marked different road intersections. Midway, side show and all of the front was ablaze with lights and huge search lights. All new canvas spread, newness in physical equipment and ultra newness in ideas of presentation reflects great credit for Ken Maynard, assistant manager Harry Chipman and Johnny Agee.

"The big arena is a fine setup. Specially noted is the huge drop across the back end, this drop typifying the Old West-shrubbery, cactus, desert plants-all brilliantly illuminated. Ground lights, reflecting lights,

The marquee led into the menagerie tent on the Maynard midway. Puck photo from Circus World Museum.



search and spot lights add much to the presentation of the program. The performance is the stand out of its kind.

"High spots are opening and closing specs; Maynard's riding, shooting and wonderful roping; Agee's liberty horses and his high knee acting horses driven to harness; Anna Velte's and Joe Metcalfe's newly broken elephant act; Jalisco troupe and bronc riding.

"The Pageant of the Old West and Great Far East had over 350 mounted and persons on foot. Aside from the usual cowboys, cowgirls, Indians and wild west characters were Bengal soldiers, U. S. Cavalry, Ethiopian soldiers, Arab horsemen, detachments typical of the Orient, etc. An exhibition of thrills by 10 Russian Cossacks, quadrille on horseback, 60 persons participating was outstanding. The Jalisco troupe of 10 men and women presented risley, tumbling, teterboard to chair catch and marvelous catch from teterboard to feet of man reclining on ground. Ten women presented a fine menage act. John Agee presented Maynard's palamino horses in a liberty rotation number. A feature is Charles Redrick's band, a 45 minute concert is given preceeding each performance.

"The side show is a fine setup, pit style with an all new banner line. Arthur 'Doc' Collins is the manager. Acts include Arthur Windecker, Punch and Judy; Jolly Jacobs, magic; Toni, midget; Oscar, gorilla; Mme. Mona, illusions; Major John, kangaroo boy; Ada Mae, snakes; Al Barker's talking dog; Ada Baine, mentalist and Ethel Greer, fat woman. Slim Austin's

black band had nine musicians and three dancers. Fifi, the sheep-headed girl, was in the annex."

The midway was colorful with the side show banner line in front of the long pit show style red and white striped tent. The red and white concession tents were opposite the side show. The red ticket wagon was spotted next to the candy stands near the marquee. The Orchestmelchoir tab, used as a second ticket wagon, was on the other end of the concession tops. The marquee was white trimmed in red, the title of the show was colorfully painted on the front. Inside the marquee was a nicely painted tee-curtain illustrated with the show's title, an Indian chief and Maynard on horseback. The usual tax box was in front of the marquee. The menagerie top was used to house the wild animal cages, two elephants and the lead stock. The entrance to the arena canopy top was through the animal tent.

The red and white canvas was left standing following the opening days, Saturday May 2 and Sunday May 3, 1936. Performances were given the next weekend on May 9 and 10. The idea of holding weekend performances at the ranch was then abandoned. There was considerable opposition from nearby Van Nuys residents, as well as city zoning officials. The ranch was in a residential section of the city.

The later part of May Maynard returned from San Diego enthusiastic about the prospects of his show playing the fair. The California Pacific International Exhibition had purchased the A. G. Barnes Circus for five performances starting March 27, playing to big business, netting \$12,000 for the fair. The Frontier Days Rodeo followed the circus at the fair to good business.

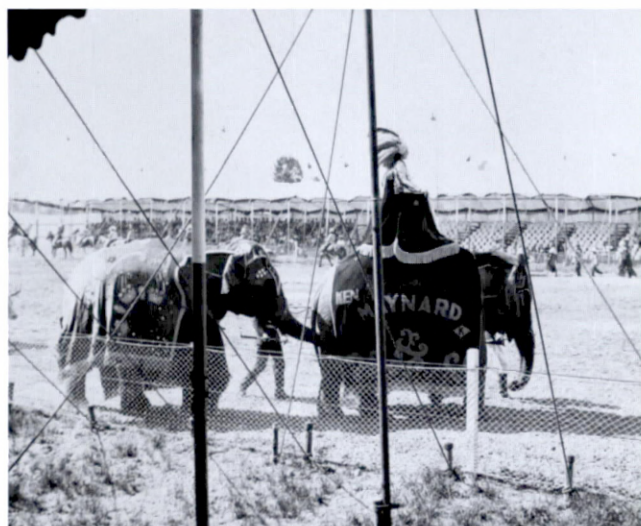
Arrangements were made to take the show to the San Diego World's Fair for a three day stand. System flats from the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe carried the wagons, and three or four system coaches carried the show personnel. The show was set up just outside the fairgrounds. These three days, June 5, 6 and 7, did not prove to be big winners. But Harry Chipman said the weather was against the show. In a 1982 letter Chipman stated that he was against taking the show to San Diego without a daily guarantee from the fair,

New side show banners were purchased, while the pitshow style tent is in the background. Al Conover collection.





Ken Maynard and his horse Tarzan are pictured in the arena during a performance. Circus World Museum collection.



Sally and Queenie the elephants are pictured in the opening spec wearing their new blankets.

but Maynard would not listen to him and he was over ruled.

The show was moved back to Maynard's ranch where the equipment was placed in quarters. Bill Penny and the Indians left for home in Oklahoma. The cookhouse was closed and all employees, except a few animal hands, were released around June 20th. A press release stated that the San Diego business did not come up to expectations. Maynard, with two horses, left to open eleven weeks of vaudeville dates starting June 24 in Grand Junction, Colorado. Harry Chipman went east to join the Tom Mix Circus as press agent, replacing Cliff McDougall. Mary Maynard and a Filipino house boy were left at the ranch to look after the stock.

The July 18 *Billboard* advised that Ken Maynard had made a statement in Lincoln, Nebraska, that his show would not open again until April of 1937. He said he had to buy 24 additional cars, two tractors and a lot of other equipment.

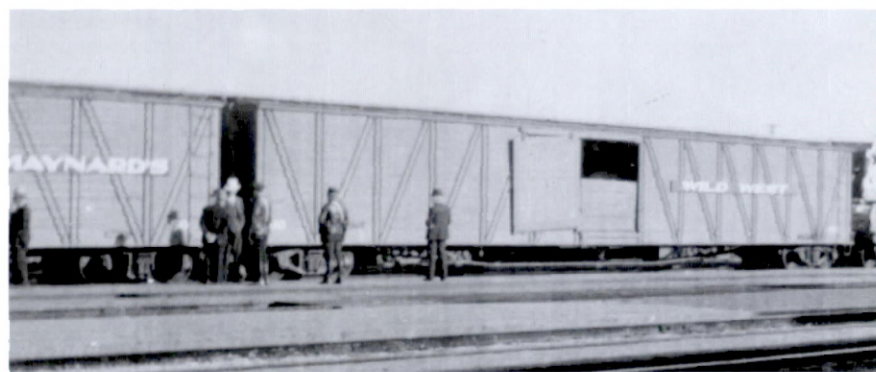
Nothing further was published concerning Maynard or his show until mid October. On October 17 it was reported that Maynard had visited Jess Adkins and Zack Terrell while the Cole Bros.-Clyde Beatty Circus was playing Long Beach, California. Shortly thereafter it was announced that Maynard would be featured with the Cole show in 1937.

It was clear that Maynard's venture as a circus owner was over. The *Billboard* of November 28, 1936 reported that the Maynard firm was in bankruptcy. The magazine had picked up a story from a Los Angeles newspaper stating that the Diamond K Ranch Circus Corporation, of which Ken Maynard was president, filed a debtor's petition in bankruptcy in Federal Court. The petition, filed by attorneys, listed assets of the company at \$45,000, with obligations exceeding \$30,000; the assets consisting principally of horses, wagons and circus equipment. It was also stated that the corporation admitted inability to meet current debts and obligations and that

Maynard had filed a second petition in Federal Court to reorganize under Section 77-B of the amended bankruptcy act. The circus was solvent, the petition set out, but was temporarily unable to meet its obligations.

The article continued giving a short history of the show as follows, "The show, organized early this year by Ken Maynard, had a rather hectic career. Show was billed to open at Maynard's ranch, four and one half miles from Van Nuys and 25 miles from Los Angeles, May 2 and show each weekend during the season. Billing the show without a permit and setting the show property on his ranch, which is zoned as a residential district, stirred up resentment starting with one woman, nearest owner to the ranch. Protests were signed by many living in the San Fernando Valley who, according to Steve Henry [who had been legal adjuster on the show], were not within their rights in protesting or being permitted to testify at several hearings that were held in the rooms of the Department of City Planning and before the committee of City Council of Planning and City Council. The battle went on for months and it was stated at the Department of City Planning that the files in the case were the largest presented in any zoning matter. Henry handled the entire matter with several committees and City Council, and succeeded in having the circus

The two stock cars from Christy are shown ready for the trip to the San Diego date. Al Conover collection.



equipment remain on the ranch on a temporary permit.

"Business with the show was not up to expectations because of the ranch being far removed from the center of population and in a community of small farms. Diamond K Ranch Circus Corporation was incorporated March 6, 1936, capital stock \$100,000 with Ken Maynard, Mrs. Mary Maynard and Ingle Carpenter, attorney, as board of directors. Creditors held several meetings and it is understood that no effort was made to prevent the petition from being filed, as all contacted said they thought Maynard was highly honorable and would pay if given an opportunity."

Creditors Robert C. Downie, Downie Bros. Inc. [tent company] C. H. Priest and Los Angeles Heavy Hardware Co. had forced the Diamond K Ranch Circus Corporation into bankruptcy. Mary L. Maynard was named trustee.

An inventory was taken of the equipment and an appraisal was made by the creditors. A copy of the appraisal dated November 17, 1936, in the Pfening Archives lists the following: Animals: one male bear; three buffalos; one camel; one white deer; two elephants, Sally and Queenie; seven horses; two leopards; six lions; twelve monkeys; one ostrich; one raindeer; two sacred cows; two



The United Tent Company rented the Maynard equipment out for motion picture work. The steam calliope is shown after being used in an Olsen and Johnson film. Al Conover collection.

tigers and three zebras. The elephants were valued at \$1500 each and a six horse liberty act was listed at \$1200, these with all other animals totaled \$8905.

The wagons were listed as follows: #70 tiger cage, red and white, 16 ft. long, poor condition, \$75; #101 cage, yellow and white, 12 ft., fair condition, \$150; #103 bear cage, green and white, 12 ft., fair condition, \$100; #105 "Whiskers" cage, red, 13 ft., fair condition, \$200; #102 cage, red, 12 1/2 ft., bad condition, \$75; #84 monkey cage, red, 10 ft., fair condition-new body, \$100; #131 cage, 12 ft. no commercial value; #106 "Beauty" tableau, blue and white, 15 ft., fair condition, \$200; #108 "Sea Shell" tableau (candy wagon), 14 ft., fair condition, \$200; #122 "Diamond Mirrors" tableau, blue, 14 ft., fair condition, \$200; #94 steam calliope, white, 13 ft. \$500; #116 air calliope, green, 8 ft., fair condition, \$150; #63 stake and chain baggage wagon, 11 1/2 ft., poor condition, \$50; #72 prop wagon, 13 ft., poor condition, \$75; #74 "Swan" bandwagon, 21 ft., fair condition, \$400; #76 cookhouse wagon, 16 ft., \$50; #120 light plant wagon, 10 ft., \$25; #78 "orchestmelchoir" ticket wagon, 15 ft., wheels in bad shape, \$200; #68 plank wagon, 13 ft., \$50; #79 pole wagon, 25 ft., \$100; #78 canvas wagon, 16 ft. \$250; #77 plank wagon, 12 ft., \$100; #130 ticket wagon, 13 ft., fair condition, \$150 and two sets of running gear, \$35. Total value of the 23 wagons was \$3510.

The canvas listed included: one 30 by 50

khaki top, \$100; one 20 by 80 side show top, complete with poles, stakes and bally curtain, \$800; two 12 by 14 candy tops, \$90 each; one 15 by 15 grease joint top, \$97.50; one 20 by 30 khaki top, \$118.50; one 30 by 30 by 12 marquee, \$257.50; one 80 by 180 by 12, \$1250; one 200 by 300 wild west canopy, \$3500; one 60 by 150 by 12 pad room top, \$1500; one 24 by 40 wardrobe top, \$150; three 16 by 16 pyramid tops, \$15 each; four 12 by 14 wall tents, \$18 each; one set of scenery, \$150; four large teepees, \$14 each; two small teepees, \$10 each; two khaki and green curtains, \$21 each and three seat end curtains \$37 each. Total value of canvas was \$8562.

Seating equipment consisted of 49 lengths of star backs, \$4900 and 18 lengths of blues, \$990, totaling \$5890. An extensive list of blacksmith shop equipment totaled \$557.55. The cookhouse equipment was valued at a total of \$642.19.

Under wardrobe all of the Indian costumes totaled \$706.75. Uniforms, animal blankets and horse plumes totaled \$1887.25. Novelty stock value, including 887 pennants and 1365 balloons totaled \$245.95. Fifteen 8 by 10 side show banners were valued at \$20 each. Other flags came to \$433.25. Harness, saddles and yokes were valued at a total of \$830. All other miscellaneous equipment, including a 28 ft. and a 38 ft. ring curb totaled \$8557.95. The total appraised inventory was \$40,320.99. Missing from the inventory were the railroad stock cars and some wagons that may have been junked due to their unusable condition. The stock cars were either leased or owned

Five system flats and four system coaches were used with the stock cars for the San Diego trip. Joe Rettinger collection.



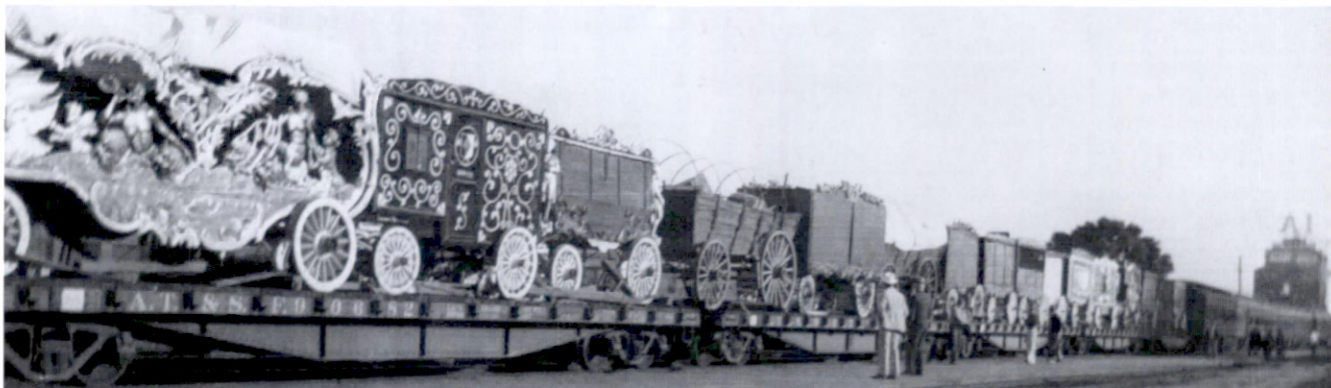
Charles "Spud" Redrick and the big show band posed in front of the air calliope wagon. Al Conover collection.

owned personally by Maynard, and escaped the creditors.

The United Tent & Awing Co., of Los Angeles, purchased the following wagons: canvas wagon, stake and chain wagon, property wagon, seat plank wagon, cookhouse wagon, pole wagon, generator wagon, 4 cages, 2 calliope wagons, 2 ticket wagons, 3 carved tableau wagons, clown bandwagon and the Swan bandwagon. The tent company owned most of the wagons for a number of years renting them out for motion picture work. The steam calliope was cut down and used in the film "Chad Hanna." About 1947 a number of the wagons were sold to the Bradley & Kaye amusement park on Beverly Blvd. in Hollywood. In a wagon inventory by Joe Bradbury, published in the November-December 1953 *White Tops* the following wagons were at the amusement park: Swan bandwagon; Scroll tab; Orchestmelchoir tab; Beauty tab; Steam calliope; canvas wagon #50; plank wagon #77; Whiskers cage #105; cage #101, the ticket wagon and the air calliope wagon. The monkey cage #84 was at the Lucas Kiddie Land, in Los Angeles, in 1953.

In 1955 the Disney Studios purchased the former Maynard wagons that had been at Bradley & Kaye, except for the ticket wagon, and rebuilt them for use in the Disneyland Circus the same year. Disney later donated the Maynard wagons, as well as others they had purchased, to the Circus World Museum in Baraboo, Wisconsin.

The ticket wagon in deplorable condition



THE GREATEST WILD WEST SHOW ON EARTH

KEN MAYNARD'S
DIAMOND K RANCH

WILD WEST
CIRCUS
and INDIAN CONGRESS

THE WORLD'S NEWEST GIANT RAILROAD SHOW

KEN MAYNARD
America's Greatest Western Screen Star
IN PERSON
The Idol of Millions
with His
WONDER HORSE "TARZAN"
At Every Performance

The Latest, Largest and Most Modern
DOUBLE MENAGERIE
CONTAINING A COMPLETE COLLECTION OF
RARE WILD BEASTS
A Mighty University of Natural History

WORTH TRAVELING
MILES TO SEE
A Revelation of Aboriginal Days Acclaimed a
Masterpiece of National and Rational Amusement
More Instructive than

HISTORY OR LITERATURE
Illustrating the Period of Unbroken Prairies and
Hostile Indians
ACCLAIMED BY ALL AS THE
20th CENTURY EPIC
A Shifting Panorama of Thrilling Events and
Episodes Presented in an Open Air Exceeding
in Scope and Intensity Anything Heretofore
Devised by Mankind

FREE STREET PARADE
IN THE FORENOON PRECEDING THE FIRST PERFORMANCE
Ken Maynard's
GIFT TO THE KIDDIES
A Colossal Two Mile Caravan of
Marvelous Grandeur with Scores
of Open Dens Drawn by Prancing
Horses - Uniformed Squadrons of
Horsemen, Flying Colors
from Two Hemispheres - Glit-
tering Tableaux Wagons,
with Strange Natives of
every Clime - Bands of Music,
Calliopes & Organs - SUCH AS
ONLY A NIGHT SHOW TRANSPORTED ON
ITS OWN RAILROAD TRAINS COULD OFFER
OR DARE TO REVIVE - TO YOU

A GREAT CONVENTION
OF CIRCUS
CHAMPIONS AND
CELEBRITIES

Two Performances - 2 & 8 p.m. DOORS OPENING ONE HOUR EARLIER

This herald was designed by Harry Chipman for the show. It is printed in red and black.

was rejected by Disney. Bradley later sold the ticket wagon to the Wonderland Museum amusement park in Billings, Montana. Harold G. Davidson found the wagon in Billings in 1969, purchased it and had it trucked to his home in Santa Barbara, California. Davidson located Maynard and during a visit was told that Dan O'Connor had originally painted the ticket wagon for Maynard in 1936, and was still in business in San Fernando. O'Connor supplied Davidson with the lettering and colors he had applied to the wagon in 1936. Davidson began restoring the wagon and found two faded tickets in it, one for Howes Great London and another for Lee Bros. The wagon restoration was finally completed in 1975. Some years later Davidson sent the wagon to the Circus World Museum, where it is today. It can be assumed that the remaining unaccounted for Maynard wagons rotted away in an unknown grave.

The two elephants that Maynard received from Louis Goebel in Thousand Oaks, California were returned to Goebel soon after the show closed. It would appear that Maynard had purchased the bulls originally as they appear on the official inventory. Goebel may have bought them back, or they may have been returned for lack of payment. Goebel rented Sally and Queenie for motion picture work, and in 1938 Queenie traveled with the Crowley United Shows carnival. Sally and Queenie went to Jungland in Thousand Oaks where both were destroyed in an elephant barn fire in 1940.

Not all of the equipment was sold in 1936. Maynard advertised his remaining circus equipment for sale in the November 6, 1937 issue of the *Billboard*. The ad listed the following: six stock cars built in 1933; 29 lengths of star backs; a wild west canopy, miscellaneous tents including wardrobe, candy and hamburger stands; a 20 by 80 ft. pit show complete with poles, one reindeer and Santa Claus sleigh, elephant covers, assorted Indian wardrobe, assorted uniforms for all departments, blacksmith tools and flags for parade, tournament and menagerie. No record has been found concerning the purchases of this remaining equipment. The 1937 ad was the last *Billboard* mention of the Ken Maynard's Diamond K Wild West.

Maynard wrote to Bill Woodcock on November 24, 1937 as follows, "The only circus property I wish to dispose of at the present time consists of six railroad baggage cars. These cars are 70 feet long, steel beam, pressed steel top. Two of the cars have doors opening on the ends as well as on the sides. The other cars have double, six foot doors in the center sides. These cars have 1 1/2 inch sides of shiplap and approximately two-inch fronts. The cars are in perfect condition for immediate railroad transportation. They passed all required inspections a year ago when last used. These cars at small cost be changed into stock cars or gilly cars or any other type that may be necessary in your business. The cars are priced at \$750 each, hoping for a quick sale."

The description of the cars in the letter to Woodcock is a bit confusing, as they do not appear to be of the same construction as those pictured with the Maynard title in 1936 which shows typical circus stock car design. The cars described in the letter sound more like baggage cars, typical of those used on two and three car baggage car circuses.

In a February 15, 1938 letter to Stanley Dawson Maynard wrote, "I wired Mrs. Maynard I would agree to the disposal of two of the cars at that price although it is stealing them. But I like the men that want them so what the hell." It is not known what happened to the six cars.

Maynard continued his motion picture work at Columbia Studios where he made four films in 1936. In 1937 he was featured with Clyde Beatty on the Cole Bros. Circus. After the Cole show closed the season in 1937 he made two westerns for Grand National Studios. Two additional Grand National pictures were made in 1938 before again joining the Cole show. In 1939 he made personal appearances with his horse Tarzan in



Maynard's last appearance on a circus was in 1950 on Biller Bros, where he is shown here.

movie theaters showing his films. He made one film for Colony Pictures in the fall of that year. He returned to the Cole show for the 1940 season after completing three additional films for Colony. In 1943 he signed a six film contract with Monogram Pictures that ran through 1944. Two of the 1944 films also featured Hoot Gibson and Bob Steele. He did one picture "Harmony Trail" for Astor in the fall of 1944. This was his last cowboy film.

In 1945, at age 50, he returned to the circus with the new Arthur Bros. show. His career was winding down and he was not to make another film for twenty years. He booked appearances with rodeos and fairs as he could and also made some weekend appearances at "Corriganville" a movie western town owned by former stuntman Ray Corrigan. His final nationwide tour was with Biller Bros. Circus in 1950. He had a small character part in "Bigfoot" in 1970, his last motion picture.

The final years were all down hill for Maynard. He lived alone in a trailer in the San Fernando Valley. His hair was white and he had a beard. At age 75 he weighed 250 pounds and was in poor health, from lack of activity and more drinking than eating. On January 18, 1973 he was admitted to a hospital for treatment of nutritional deficiency, arthritis and general physical deterioration. The last of the big four movie cowboys [Tom Mix, Buck Jones, Hoot Gibson and Ken Maynard] died March 23, 1973 at age 78, in the Motion Picture Home in Woodland Hills, California.

Additional research material for this article came from Mrs. Mary Maynard, Joe Bradbury, Chang Reynolds and Joe Rettinger. The information on Ken Maynard's motion picture career came from *Ken Maynard, The Fiddling Buckaroo*, by Mario DeMarco.

The Al G. Barnes' Big Four-Ring Wild Animal Circus

by Chang Reynolds

1926 SEASON

The early months of 1926 brought constant rains to southern California. All of the rivulets, streams and the large river channels, such as the Arroyo Seco, the San Gabriel and the Santa Ana were filled with muddy brown water, tumbling rocks and gravel which rolled toward the ocean. Flooding was a common occurrence.

The inclement weather probably slowed the work at the Palms quarters of the Al G. Barnes' Circus but it did not hamper it unduly. Off to a slow start during the first month and a half of the year, the painting, rebuilding and repairing progressed rapidly in late February and early March.

However, the main activities at Circus City were concerned with legal matters; primarily the attempt by which Culver City (a nearby town) planned to annex a portion of the Al G. Barnes' property on Washington Boulevard. This action commenced in January when Judge Shaw issued an order affirming the acquisition by Culver City of part of the Barnes' property. The court also granted permission for Al G. Barnes to file a bill of exceptions. This indicated that the fight launched by the circus ownership against the annexation might be appealed to a higher court. This move to invalidate the proceedings was brought by the Marcus Land and Investment Company, of which Al G. Barnes was president.

In its action the land company asked for a court of review of the proceedings, declaring the annexation would depreciate the company's holdings, which approximated about seventy acres, with an 800-foot frontage on Washington Boulevard. It was reported that the lines for the annexation district were drawn so that the front portion of Al G.'s home would be in Culver City and his sleeping quarters would remain outside the city—in other words, the boundary line went right through his house. This was probably done to drive the circus magnate out of the area.

While waiting for the decision of the annexation proceedings, Barnes took legal action to have a territory, including Barnes' Zoo, incorporated as Barnes' City. This petition was held up by the Board of Supervisors pending a decision on the case that rested with Judge Shaw, i.e., the annexation by Culver City.

The attempt by Culver City to gain the Washington Boulevard frontage was defeated by mid-February and the election to incorporate the area into a municipality to be known as "Barnes' City" was spirited and

successful. Thus, the area owned by Barnes was allowed its own post office adjoining the winter quarters. *The Barnes' City News*, a weekly, was increased to a dozen pages with "Skinny" Dawson in charge of the circulation. Charles C. Cook, manager of the circus, proved to be a skillful politician during the incorporation election.

All this effort was only a preliminary to actions taken by Al G. Barnes less than a year later when he purchased 300 acres of land fronting three-quarters of a mile on Valley Boulevard, located midway between El Monte and Baldwin Park, just east of the City of the Angels. At the time of this announcement, in late February, 1927, Barnes also stated that he planned to subdivide the property on Washington Boulevard in Palms which he said: "had become entirely too valuable to use as a winter quarters for a circus."

Early in February, 1926, a want advertisement appeared in *The Billboard* requesting "Musicians and Singers who can double some instrument." People capable of these duties were requested to contact Charles Redrick, bandmaster, of the Barnes' show. This message also requested that candy butchers, etc, contact T.F. Everett, of the show. By the middle of the month General Agent Ben Austin and Jack Glines, manager of the advertising car, had arrived at quarters and the advance contracting agents, J.C. (Dusty) Rhodes and F.W. Owens, were in the field.

Late in February Al G. Barnes, Charles C. Cook, and John T. Backman, equestrian director, were hauled into court on charges of cruelty and mistreatment to Tusko, the giant elephant, and to a horse, and a dog. In early March, Judge W.S. Brayton of Long Beach dismissed the charges against the three men.

Footage of the Al G. Barnes' circus train

Main entrance to the Al G. Barnes winter-quarters at Culver City (Barnes City), California, 1926.

was used in Marshall Neilsen's film, "Mike." It is not known when or where the film was shot but the Barnes' name was clearly visible on the cars as the train pulled into a station. The most important film endeavor at this time, however, was the Universal Film Company's circus picture from Nellie Revell's book, "Spangles." Charles Cook announced that the circus had received a check for \$75,000, said to be the highest price ever paid for the use of a circus to make a film.

Frank O'Connor was the director of the film. The circus was set up on the back lot at the Palms quarters and shooting continued for three weeks. After the circus was on the road, later in the spring, additional footage was taken, most of it at Universal Studios.

The 1926 roster of the Al G. Barnes' Circus included: Al G. Barnes, proprietor; Charles C. Cook, manager; H.I. McGlathery, treasurer; A. Wolfe, auditor; J.B. Austin, general agent; J.C. Rhodes, local contractor; F.W. Owens, special agent; Thomas Dawson, contracting press agent; Willie Pelitzer, press agent back with the show; Doc Cummings, manager side-show; John T. Backman, equestrian director; Frank Rooney, general superintendent; Tom Everett, superintendent of privileges; Charles Redrick, musical director; Nels Lausten, superintendent reserved seats; C. Jensen, superintendent canvas; Judd Bullock, trainmaster; Mike Tschudy, boss hostler; William Denny, superintendent commissary department; Ed Versteeg, superintendent of lights; Ray Wright, superintendent ring stock; John Kennedy, superintendent working crew; J.W. Long and R.M. Schell, 24-hour agents; Frank Laggett, superintendent elephants; Al Strange, boss carpenter; Louis Roth, superintendent animals; Mike Walsh, blacksmith; Jack Glines, manager of advertising car; Pop Wright, manager of brigade; Jack Burke, checker-up; J.W. Cummings, announcer; Leonard Dyer, front door; and George Tipton, steward.



The show traveled on 30 cars in 1926 and was scheduled to make its opening stand, a two-day affair, at Phoenix, Arizona, on March 18 and 19. It then moved to Mesa and Ajo, both in Arizona, and then returned to Calexico, San Diego (two days), San Bernardino, and Santa Monica in California. The next two days (Saturday and Sunday) were spent on a lot in Hollywood, and on Monday the show moved to Los Angeles on the Washington and Hill Street location for a week's stand.

Joseph T. Bradbury writes: "The only known parade type wagons carried on the road by the Al G. Barnes' Circus in 1926 were the Cupids Air Calliope and the Girl and Lion ticket wagon, both built new for the 1922 season using the Bode carvings. However, it is believed, that the Atlas and Neptune steam calliope, with the same history as the above two wagons, may have also been on the show. Some historians have claimed the steam calliope was carried through the 1928 season, the last under Al G.'s ownership. The latest dated photo showing the steamer on the show is 1925.

"It will be noted that an excellent photo of the Cornelia and Her Jewels, tableau wagon, also built new for the 1922 season with Bode carvings, is presented here. It is dated 1926 and probably was taken in winter quarters, although the slight possibility does exist that it was carried on the road for baggage purposes. No photos have turned up positively picturing it on the road in 1926." (Dick Wakefield played the air calliope and was also the show's timekeeper.)

The Al G. Barnes' Circus made the run of 550 miles from the quarters at Barnes' Circus City at Palms, California, to Phoenix, Arizona, in good order with no problems to hinder the opening performance given on 18 March. The newly painted show made a fine appearance on the lot, the weather was perfect, and the attendance was excellent.

Special note was made of the opening spectacle, *Pocahontas at the Court of Queen Anne*. It was directed and staged by Rex de Rosselli with the entire personnel of the circus participating plus opera singers and two tribes of Indians. The wardrobe was all new for the tour and the trappings were described as "gorgeous." Charles Redrick was



Al G. Barnes open air menagerie in foreground, big top in back, at a stand in Montana, season of 1926.

responsible for the excellent music and at the night performance Doc Cunningham (in behalf of the Rotary Club) and Joe V. Prochaska (chief of the Hopi tribe and general advisor of Indian affairs) presented Irene Allen, who portrayed Pocahontas, with a fine Hopi bracelet studded with precious stones. After the presentation Miss Allen was "adopted" into the Hopi tribe with the usual sacred rites.

Enroute to the Los Angeles dates, the Barnes' Circus received fine afternotices from all three San Diego newspapers. All three dailies referred to the many years that the circus had exhibited in the city with an enthusiastic welcome each season, but emphasized that the addition of sensational circus acts had placed the Barnes' show "to the highest pinnacle of circusdom" (*San Diego Tribune*). The *Union* stated that the show had full tents at each performance, and that the new acts won constant favor. It added: "*Pocahontas at the Court of Queen Anne*, an operatic presentation with real opera singers, a blending of beautiful lights, and a plot that tells the story of John Smith and the saving of his life, was beautifully told in song and music."

The stand in Los Angeles, 29 March

Scene taken during filming of the movie, *Spangles*, at the Al G. Barnes winterquarters, Culver City (Barnes City), California in 1926.



through 4 April, followed the two-day date in Hollywood. The *Billboard* carried a long, one-paragraph review of the performance which included, as the paper maintained "Forty-one displays" under the direction of John T. Backman, the equestrian director. This writer has tried to account for this number of displays and cannot total a number of forty-one unless each act is considered a display. Probably the number of displays totalled thirty-one or thirty-two and, presented here, are the number of displays which actually took place in 1926.

The show opened as usual with a concert attraction and popular music offered by the Barnes' Military Band with Charles (Spud) Redrick, director. This musical session was followed by the spectacle—*Pocahontas at the Court of Queen Anne*. This splendidly costumed display was directed by Rex de Rosselli with electrical effects by Charles C. Cook.

Then came the Congress of Midgets (Klinkhardt's) and High Bill, the Texas Giant, parading around the track. Al G. Barnes followed them riding his beautiful Arabian stallion, "Rigalletto." After the owner, "Joe Martin," the movie orangutan, and "Lotus," the big hippo, paraded the hippodrome track. The opening acts on the track were concluded by Frank Rooney's team of eighty horses.

The first ring acts included ponies and zebras in military drills in one ring and ponies and llamas in the second ring, while Louis Roth in the arena presented a large group of tigers. What was probably display number eight included hind-foot ponies in the two rings with "Princess," the elephant-riding Siberian tiger in the arena. Then came tandem horses in the two rings and a large group of panthers and pumas in the arena—presented by Alma Taylor.

Display No. 10 featured Senor Ortiz, hand balancing, and Tony Pina, balancing, in the rings with ostriches ridden by show personnel jockeys on the track. Leaping Greyhounds and Russian Wolfhounds followed with "Nero," the horse-riding lion in the arena. Preceding the first big clown number, Charleston-dancing elephants occupied the hippodrome track.

The clowns then took over the rings and the track in a hilarious fantasy. They were: Milton Taylor, Kinko, "Sunny" Sunberg, Bill Tate, Danny McAvoy, Martino Lowande, Jr., George Redrick, Bill Ward, Sam Bennett, "Skinny" Sunberg, Toby Tyler, Fred (Dutch)

Marco, Tom Baker, Jack McAfee, Laurence Swalley, the Charleston Kid, James Hackensmuth, Bobby Hamm, and Tiny Ward.

The rings were then occupied by Lowande and Bennett and Chavez, comedy riders; and Captain Ralph Stockton with a group of African lions in the arena. This display was followed by eight show-girls on the swinging and revolving ladders and then came the Liberty horses (in two rings), directed by Austin King and Max Sabel; and a group of zebras presented by Bob Morton.

Display No. 17 presented the original, old-time Barnes' number—the aerial lion (still called "Samson") with Clara Everett, trainer. Clowns came next and featured "Jargo," the comedy giraffe; Toby Tyler on high stilts, a bucking driverless Ford; and the rest of the clown congress.

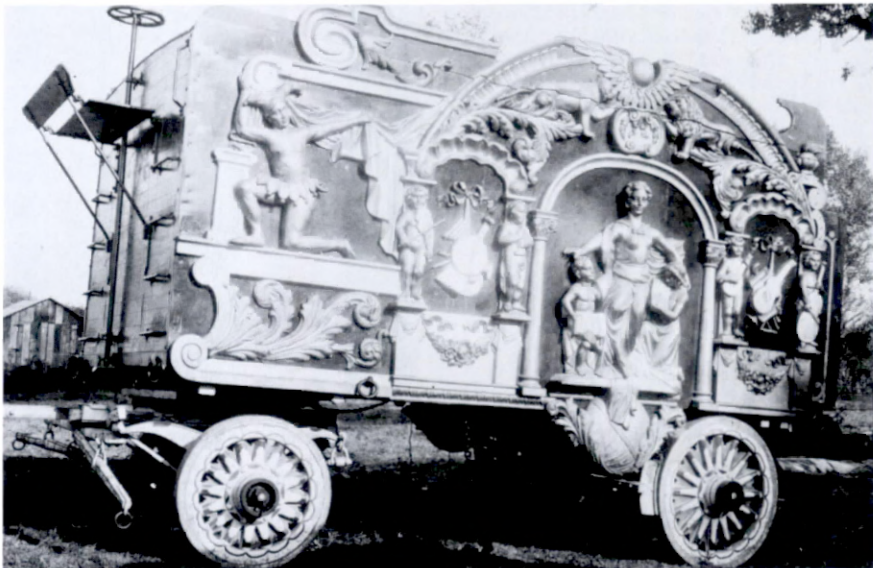
The next series of displays offered trained sea lions, presented by Capt. Charles; polar bears in the arena; the Famous Riding Four; and the Pina Family, Mexican jugglers and acrobats. This series concluded with a novelty display of birds of rare plumage (macaws and parrots) combined with aerial acts—and then the clowns again filled the rings and track.

The usual operatic number, featuring Irene Allen, with white doves and pigeons followed the clown antics. In turn, her songs were no sooner completed than "Bimbo," the singing mule appeared. The big wire and aerial display followed the mule. It featured Anita Pina, Herminia Atayde and Senor Pedrosa on the slack wire and the Le Tourneaus and Sammy Cunningham in the air. Clowns came next, and when they departed, the Slayman Ali Troupe of Arabs, a fast tumbling act, filled the rings.

Again an old-time Barnes' number, the forty dancing horses and forty singing and dancing girls filled the rings and track for Display No. 28. And then came the dancing and waltzing elephants and "Nero," the riding lion, in the arena. The big act of the circus, Louis Roth's large group of lions, appeared near the end of the performance and was followed by the extravaganza, *America*.

Various races on the hippodrome track concluded the performance. These featured: Indian, cowboy, jockey and Cossack races; Whippet hound and pony races; ponies with monkey riders; and Roman standing races with Irene Russell and Mark Smith, riders.

The Al G. Barnes Side-Show, under the management of Doc Cunningham, did fine business at Los Angeles. The attractions included: High Bill, the Texas giant; Klinkhardt's troupe of midgets; "Karu," the Congo cannibal; "Jiggs," chimpanzee; Frank Martin, tattooed man; Jolly Josephine, fat girl; Rosseau Family of ten, Hawaiian entertainers; "Simon," the lion-slaying baboon; and Mme. Elsie Baker, half-man and half-woman, the special added attraction. Others who worked in the side-show were Bob Henricks, number one ticket box; Lee Wheeler and Len Oglivie, ticket sellers; Austin King and Herman Klinkhardt, ticket takers; Ralph Madison, inside lecturer; James Mitchell and James Murray and the



Excellent close-up sideview of the Cornelia and Her Jewels tableau wagon. Date of photo supposedly is 1926, however location

is not known. In all probability the shot was taken at the Culver City (Barnes City), California winterquarters.

Royal Highland Kilties Band. King was the personal representative of Mme. Baker and presented the attraction while Klinkhardt handled the side-show canvas.

The Chevas Brothers, Mexican riders, were added to the big show just before the Los Angeles stand and shared honors with the Lowande Troupe as principal bareback riders. Betty Kenyon was featured as the principal lady rider. Several accidents occurred during the engagement in Los Angeles. Two aerialists, Herminia Atayde and Bernice Brown, fell from their rigging at different performances and at the matinee on 1 April, Louis Roth was attacked by two of his tigers. One of them carried him to the floor under her weight but Roth managed to struggle to his feet and fought her off with his whip. Although the trainer's face and arms were badly bitten, he finally quieted the beasts and finished the act. Roth went to the hospital where twenty stitches were required

to close the wounds, but he returned for the night performance.

From Los Angeles the Barnes' show went to Long Beach for two days and then played Alhambra with a night show only. The matinee in that town was lost due to the amount of water on the lot. The heavy downpours which occurred in the spring of 1926 were still continuing and almost every stand brought muddy lots and some rain. The show did not avoid the inclement weather until it reached the San Joaquin Valley in the middle of April. The show made a long run north along the coast to play Santa Barbara on 10 April and then returned to the Los Angeles area to make a stand in Watts on the following day. That was a Sunday stand and on Monday the show gave two performances at its home base, Barnes' City. Burbank and Fillmore followed and on Wednesday night the show train made the long run over mountains and desert to Bakersfield—and escaped the coastal rains.

Taft, on 16 April, was the best day of the young season with real circus weather and the tent packed to the ring curbs at both per-

Inside the Al G. Barnes menagerie tent, season of 1926. Note cage line at right and Lotus the hippo's den in center background.





formances. By the middle of May a report reached *The Billboard* that business for the Barnes' show during the first four weeks of the season—marked by eight days of heavy rain—was the worst ever seen in California during the spring. The next four weeks were marked by good matinees and big night attendance in fine weather.

Notes from the show reported that Alma Taylor was seriously injured when attacked by her leopards; Tim Buckley, the veteran elephant trainer, was breaking a new animal act; and that Goldie Backman, wife of John T. Backman, had returned to the show from Hollywood where she had been working her high-school horse in Universal films.

The route in the central valley after mid-April took the show along the east side as far north as Modesto and then it moved west to play coastal towns such as Monterey and Santa Cruz on its way north to a three-day Oakland date. The Barnes' show was forced to pass up San Francisco again due to the lack of a suitable lot, but it played Oakland to crowded tents at every one of the six performances. *The Billboard* published another review of the show as presented in Oakland. It was essentially the same as that from Los Angeles; the order slightly different for some of the acts.

From Oakland the Barnes' Circus went to Vallejo and Santa Rosa. At the latter town members of the show visited the burial site

Al G. Barnes blowdown at Powell, Wyoming, June 30, 1926.

of Luther Burbank, the famous horticulturist. Al G. placed a wreath of roses on the grave in tribute to the great scientist. Sacramento was the next stand and the show played to two very good houses. Governor Richardson and party were visitors here. From the state capitol the circus moved north with dates at Chico, Orland, and Mt. Shasta. Klamath Falls was the first Oregon stand. This town gave the best business of the season so far; even exceeding that of Taft four weeks earlier. Only one performance was given at Montague the next day and business was very poor.

The show reported the acquisition of fifty macaws and parrots from Ansel Robinson, the San Francisco wild animal dealer. These birds were added to the bird acts by John T. Backman. A birthday celebration was given in honor of Mme. Elsie Baker at Roseburg, Oregon. There was an exchange of visits with the Abner Kline show personnel when it and the Barnes' Circus day and dated. Betty Kenyon added Roman riding to her accomplishments and Adrian Gallagher, aerialist, was performing new stunts in her act. Charles C. Charles was rehearsing new

Elephant line in Al G. Barnes menagerie, season of 1926.



sea lions for his act as the show made its two-day stand at Portland, Oregon, on 17-18 May.

On Wednesday, 18 May, the Barnes' Circus played Astoria, Oregon, and then entered Washington to play ten towns. This included another two-day date at Seattle. Business was reported as "good" all through the state and on 1 June the show entered British Columbia with a very successful two-day date at Vancouver. From this point the circus played four additional towns in British Columbia; five cities in Alberta; nine stands in Saskatchewan; and then returned to Alberta to give performances in three more towns. It then re-entered the States at Sunburst, Montana, on 27 June.

In general the Canadian tour was profitable. Excellent business was encountered in Vancouver, Kamloops, and Vernon, B.C. At Edmonton an action to increase the license fee was voted down by the city council and the circus played to two packed houses. The license fee remained at the usual figure of \$300. During the tour in British Columbia Max Sabel was injured by a camel that had recently arrived on the show. He was left behind in the hospital.

Rain swept the area on the weekend of 19-21 and business was limited at Regina and Weyburn, Sask. At this time Austin King left the show to make his way to New York City to greet a dozen stallions recently arrived from Asia Minor. A newcomer to the circus was the aerialist, La Petite Marie, from France. She was a sister of Mme. Le Tourneau, one of the show's star performers. Blanche Reed, bareback rider, joined the show at the end of the 28-day Canadian tour. Mizzi and Sheriff, Arabs, were added to the Slayman Hadji Ben Ali Troupe of acrobats at this time and Jack Cavanaugh, a feature of the big show and concert, Billie Mack, and Lois DeLisle, aerialists, and Ruth Wolfe were singled out for their accomplishments. John T. Backman framed an aerial number in which twenty-six single aerialists appeared at one time with each rigging carrying electric lights. Max Sabel returned but was not sufficiently recovered from the camel attack to work.

Two other circuses were playing Canadian dates at this time. Lee Bros. had entered the province of Ontario at Sarnia on 20 May. It made twenty-eight stands in that province and then moved west into Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta. Its last Canadian date was at Lethbridge on 14 July; it then returned to the States at Sweetgrass, Montana.

Heritage Bros. Circus spent nearly four weeks in Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, and British Columbia beginning on 18 June at Emerson, Manitoba. It left Canada after its final stand at Grand Forks, B.C., on 14 July and made its next date at Colville, Washington.

Strange as it may seem, the Al G. Barnes' Circus, Lee Bros., and Heritage Bros., despite moving through these western Canadian provinces during the same general time period, did not duplicate any of the towns. The Barnes' show succeeded in playing the larger, well-known towns leaving the smaller places to the Lee Bros. and the Heritage Bros. shows. In late July and August the Sells-



Max Sabel working liberty horses at an open air performance, season of 1926. This photo was probably taken the day after a storm while the big top was still being repaired.

Floto Circus played some of the cities that Barnes' had made a month earlier. This circus continued into the northwestern states and moved south along the Pacific Coast playing many of the Barnes' favorite stands in the spring.

Three Montana towns were played when the Barnes' Show returned to the States; then Powell, Wyoming. It then returned to Montana to play Red Lodge on 1 July. Seven additional stands were made in the state before winding up at Libby on 8 July. Then the show began jumping back and forth in Washington, Idaho, Utah, and Oregon. All of these were one-day stands in very hot weather. Many of the towns brought capacity crowds to the afternoon performances and at night the fans were packed to the ring curbs. Visitors at Billings, Montana, were the Prince and Princess of Sweden. Mme. Schumann-Heink and members of her company were also entertained at that city.

Birthday celebrations were always popular on the Barnes' Circus and were featured by elaborate food dishes and a gaily decorated tent plus music from the big show or side-show bands. Among those celebrating during these weeks in the northwest were Alma Taylor, Clara Everett, Lillian Hopkins, and George Tipton. Some changes in jobs took place during July: Bob McGuire was on the front door ticket box and Colonel Cress took over the big wagon ticket window. With the Colonel were Charles C. Charles and John Fowler.

At Powell, Wyoming, the only stand in that state in 1926, a strong, gusty wind leveled the horse tents and the cookhouse immediately after the matinee. The cloudburst which followed brought down the side-show. The big top was ripped in many places and threatened to flatten at any second. As soon

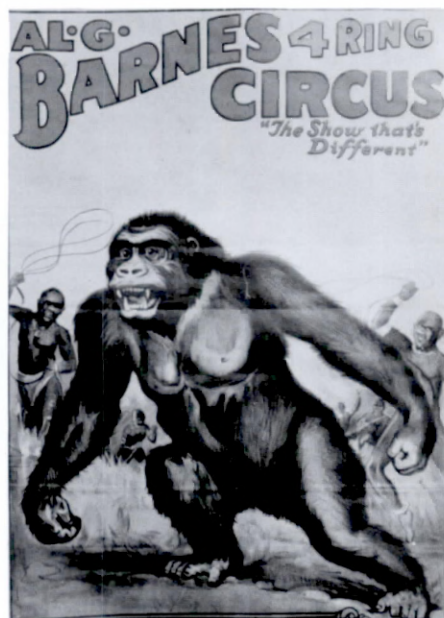
as the wind and rain subsided, Frank Rooney set everybody to work to make repairs and the side-show and evening performance were able to open about the usual time. Business, however, was only fair.

The month of July was spent in Montana (eight dates), Washington (one stand), Idaho (three towns), and then a return to Washington for four more stands. The Barnes' Show then went into Idaho again to pick up four more towns. On Sunday the train made the run from Twin Falls to Salt Lake City. On the lot to greet the showfolks were Arthur Heritage, general manager of the Heritage Bros. Circus, and his local contracting agent, James M. Beach. They had driven to Salt Lake City for the visit while their show was playing Pendleton, Oregon. It should be mentioned that this show featured eight acts in the big cage; trainers were Dolly Castle and "Chubby" Gilfoyle. Joe Metcalf was in charge of the show's three elephants. Lee Bros. also featured several wild animal acts presented by Terrell Jacobs, while Eugene Scott was in charge of the two elephants.

By 1 August the Barnes' Circus was back in Montana again and then played several towns in North Dakota; doubled back to Wolf Pack, Montana; and then returned to North Dakota and Minnesota. On 14 August the show added a significant group of aerialists—the Behee Family. These people were signed for the balance of 1926 and the 1927 tour. This family performed a trio ring act; single trapeze and web (Earl Behee); and swinging ladder (Leta Behee). A quick look over the performance at this time would indicate that the Al G. Barnes' show was becoming very strong in aerial performance—much stronger than in any of its previous touring seasons.

At Crookston, Minnesota, after the matinee several of the performers went to the hospital to entertain the invalids. Among those who performed were most of the clowns, "Spud" Redrick and his band, the Slayman Ali Troupe, and the cast from *Pocahontas*. About this time (mid-August) Austin King, the horse trainer, left for

Al G. Barnes open air cookhouse at Red Lodge, Montana, July 1, 1926, the day following the storm at Powell, Wyoming. Note the show's stock cars in background.



Joe Martin, the motion picture gorilla, was featured during the 1926 season. Harold Dunn collection.

Hollywood with six of the Barnes' zebras. He added six more of the striped equines from the Barnes' quarters and joined Cecil B. DeMill's company which was filming *The King of Kings*. This was the first time in movie history that zebras were used hitched to chariots. It was also reported that the contract (for this film) was the highest figure ever paid to a circus for such work.

Fargo was the last stand in North Dakota and then the show moved into Minnesota on 14 August. It reached Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin, on the 17th. The week following was marred by rain and soft lots as the circus played three Wisconsin stands and four Michigan towns. The show then returned to Wisconsin for two dates and then added four stands in Illinois and Indiana. The best of these was at Evanston, Illinois, on 27 August when every seat was taken and straw was used wherever possible. Ed Brannan of the Robbins Bros. Circus and Mrs. Jerry Mugivan were among the visitors. Also, at this stand, was Walter Driver and he left the lot with an order for new tents and banners amounting

to \$8,000. The order for six side-show banners and drapery was delivered within forty-eight hours. The remaining canvas was scheduled to reach the show in Detroit.

From Hammond, Indiana, the Barnes' Circus returned to Michigan for nine stands: three of them being in Detroit. Two Ohio towns occupied the show on 8-9 September and from there the show moved into Kentucky for performances in eight cities. Early in September Cuban Mack and wife, impalement act, sword swallowing, and juggling, left the Robbins Bros. Circus and joined the Al G. Barnes' side-show. Jimmy Young, who had charge of the Barnes' elephants at this time, left Barnes and joined the Robbins Bros. Circus to work under "Highpockets" Baudendistel. Apparently there were several different men in charge of the Barnes' elephants this season. Frank Leggett replaced Young as elephant superintendent and when he departed a young man named "Sippi" took over for the rest of the year.

The elephants on the show this season were the same Asian females plus the male, Vance. A photograph this writer noted at the Circus Hall of Fame (dated 1926) shows five large elephants and perhaps three or four small elephants. The larger elephants would be Babe, Ruth, Jewel, Pearl and Jenny. The smaller group would include Vance, Palm, Culver. Countess should be with the large elephants and, of course, Tusko remained in quarters. If there was a fourth small elephant with the show this year it was probably Cedro, but he doesn't appear to have been on the show after this date. Culver, age nine years, appeared in the records of the San Diego Zoo as being acquired on 11 August 1926. She was donated to the zoo by C.R. Holmes. It is probably accurate that the 1926 Barnes' herd traveled with ten elephants in the early months of the tour and ended the season with nine.

In early September Austin King wrote from Circus City that ten zebras, a tapir, several lions and tigers and some other new animals had arrived at the zoo. King returned to the circus by the middle of the month with ten zebras which he had been working for the film, *King of Kings*. It was also an-

Al G. Barnes performance in progress without the big top. Photo was probably taken at Red Lodge, Montana, July 1, 1926,



AL G. BARNES' 4 RING CIRCUS				
OFFICIAL ROUTE				
ITINERARY NO. 23.				
Date	Yours	State	Railroad	Miles
Sept. 6	Flint, Mich.	M. C. and G. T.	74	
Sept. 7	Monroe, Mich.	P. M.	82	
Sept. 8	Tiffin, Ohio	Penn.	68	
Sept. 9	Middletown, Ohio	Big 4	142	
Sept. 10	Cynthiana, Ky.	L. & N.	38	
Sept. 11	Lexington, Ky.	Big 4 and Southern	118	
Sept. 12	Sunday			
Sept. 13	Owensboro, Ky.	L.N. & NISHL	194	
Sept. 14	Henderson, Ky.	L.H. & S.L.	32	
Sept. 15	Madisonville, Ky.	L.N.	38	
Sept. 16	Hopkinsville, Ky.	L.N.	35	
Sept. 17	Paducah, Ky.	IC	74	
Sept. 18	Pulaski, Ky.	IC	78	
Sept. 19	Sunday			
Sept. 20	Blytheville, Ark.	IC & Frisco	172	
Sept. 21	Paragould, Ark.	Cotton Belt	38	
Sept. 22	Jonesboro, Ark.	Cotton Belt	22	
Sept. 23	Clarendon, Ark.	Cotton Belt	30	
Sept. 24	Helena, Ark.	M P	47	
Sept. 25	Forest City, Ark.	M P	43	
Total Mileage				16,512
The home of Al G. Barnes Circus is BARNES CITY, California, fifteen minutes from Los Angeles, where population is one million two hundred and fifty thousand. The climate in BARNES CITY has no equal, cool ocean breeze in the summer and warm breeze from the tropics in winter.				

nounced at this time that construction had started on Barnes' motion picture studio. It was being erected on the zoo grounds thus providing one of the most modern training quarters combined with film studio on the West Coast.

Notes from the show regarding the personnel in mid-September indicated that "Stick" Davenport and his troupe had joined. Billie Mack and Mark Smith became associated with the Davenport Troupe.

The show entered Kentucky on 10 September but some prior events are worth noting. At Grand Rapids, Michigan, on 1 September the show's license was cancelled at the last minute due to opposition from the local fair officials. A second lot was located outside the city limits—seven miles out—and there was a weak matinee but good business at night. The show experienced train problems at Tiffin, Ohio, on 8 September and did not reach Middletown until three o'clock in the afternoon. The matinee was lost but the evening performance started at 8:30 to capacity business. Flint, Michigan, a couple of days earlier had turnaways at both performances. The side-shows were packed before

the day following the storm at Powell, Wyoming. Bert Dennis is working horses in foreground.

noon and remained so nearly all day. Doc Cunningham and Austin King reported the greatest business for the entire year thus far.

Owensboro, the third Kentucky stand, brought two good houses. The night performance had every seat filled with some patrons standing. Additional show news for September mentioned that Ed Versteeg, superintendent of the electrical department, had installed a cooling system in the big top which used twenty-five ten-inch fans. Versteeg was also given credit for the magnificent lighting used in the production of *Pocahontas*. Edward "Whitey" Versteeg became an outstanding electrician with the Barnes' Circus during the early 1920s. He began as an assistant to Bill Saunders, the 1920 light chief. During the earlier years of the Barnes' show, C.E. Huntsberger had been Superintendent of the Electrical Dept. His crew in 1915 consisted of F.C. Miller, assistant supt. and Mechanical Engineer, and H. Montgomery, assistant supt. in charge of spot lights. Horace White and G.M. Brock were Line Inspectors and there were three electricians, F.J. Berry, R. Spickerman, and Randolph Hegeman.

In 1916 the show carried two separate electrical units, each on a wagon and operated from one double switch board, thus should one unit fail, the second could be immediately switched to power. The electrical plants were of 35 kilowatt capacity and driven by 90 horse-power Mitchell automobile engines. Over each ring was a large reflecting pan, studded with large nitrogen lights. This gave the effect of a darkened theatre auditorium and accentuated the intensity of the lights on the rings. During the balloon number (Mabel Stark) and Miss Earle's singing number all lights were extinguished and these performers were illuminated by spot lights. Outside the big top were six studio-type arc lights and one search light which was operated from the top of the ticket wagon and was directed into the sky over the village or town to attract patrons to the lot.

When Versteeg arrived on the show (he had previously worked at the Delco Company in Denver, Colorado) Saunders assigned him to the front end of the show attending the illumination of the side-show, the pit show, and the menagerie. At this time a 32-volt electrical system was used on the train. Power was supplied by two light plants, a Delco and a Kohler. The private car of Al G. Barnes was equipped with storage batteries.

In 1920 the Barnes' Show had studio-type carbon arc spot lights and a switch board mounted in #10 wagon (air calliope). This was also a parade wagon and after the long march downtown it was placed near the bandstand. The calliope instrument was removed and spotted in front of the bandstand where it rested on jacks. The wagon itself became the light control center.

Versteeg experimented a great deal with the lights and developed new techniques in those years of the 'twenties and, after the Barnes' show became a part of the American Circus Corporation, he began to work with sound and recording systems. He continued this effort under Ringling management.



Hippo, Lotus, at the Al G. Barnes winterquarters, Culver City (Barnes City), California in 1926. The horse shed is at left and Tusko's corral in rear.

By 1922, "Whitey" Veersteeg was listed as superintendent of lights on the Barnes' show. Although throughout succeeding years Charles C. Cook was given credit in the reviews of the circus for lighting effects, it is probably correct to say that Veersteeg was the prime designer of the lighting for the show.

To return to the 1926 tour, it was reported in late September that the Barnes' show would not close until late November or early December. (Actually the only major circus to close early was Heritage Bros.) Martin Lowande, Jr. had developed an excellent riding act composed of Jenny Miller, Betty Kenyon, "Skinny" Sunburg, Mr. Lowande and Jack McAfee, comedy. Lowande was also doing a principal act.

Barnes ended its Kentucky tour in Fulton on 18 September. The next day, a Sunday, the show folk visited Memphis. It was reported that Al G. had exchanged some of his animals for some of those at the Memphis Zoo.

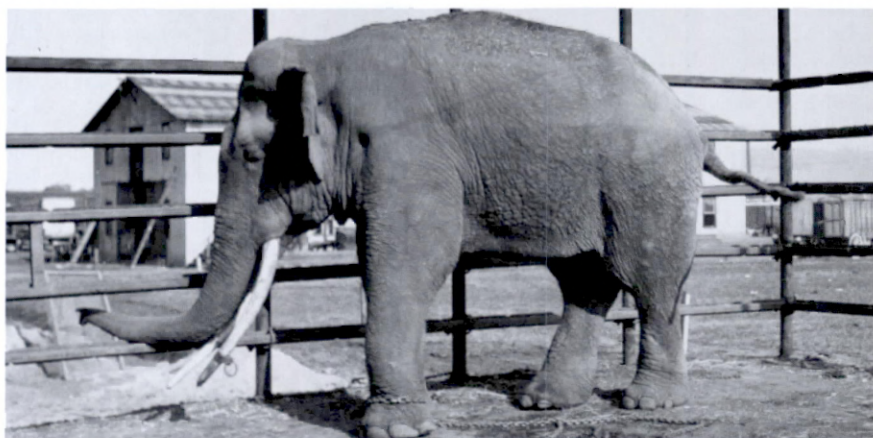
L.B. Backenstoe returned from New York with new attractions for his East India Show. This was the first mention of this second annex and it is not known when it arrived on the circus, but presumably it joined after the return to the States from Canada. Billie Cavanaugh took over the role of "Queen Anne" in the spec, and Irene Allen continued to sing the title role. Babe LeBurneau became a feature of the performance with her new aerial act; Louis Roth was working fourteen tigers in his act; and trainer, Ralph Stockton, worked the big lion act.

The Barnes' show entered Arkansas at Blytheville, on 20 Sept. Very hot weather was

limiting attendance at the afternoon shows, but the circus drew well at night. A week of dates in Arkansas concluded that portion of the tour and on Sunday the 26th the show moved into Mississippi for three stands. It entered Louisiana for four dates (three days at New Orleans) and then returned to Mississippi for one day at McComb on 4 October.

At the New Orleans stand at Canal Street and Jefferson Davis Parkway the show spent over a thousand dollars and a great deal of effort to make this new lot ready for circus use. The result was rewarding business with the races omitted at the Sunday performance due to patrons packed to the ring curbs. A new big top, from the Neuman Tent Company, was first used at Baton Rouge. It was a 180-ft. with five 60-ft. pieces. In addition the circus reported that there was a big de-

Elephant, Tusko, in his corral at the Al G. Barnes winterquarters, Culver City (Barnes City), California in 1926. Tusko did not go on the road with the show that season.



Outdoor training ring at the Al G. Barnes winterquarters, Culver City (Barnes City), California in 1926.

mand from the public for the return of Tusko to the performance. A railroad car especially designed to transport the big elephant was in the planning stages for 1927. In addition his menagerie home was to include a large platform with Oriental drapes.

The Barnes' Show made five additional stands in Louisiana after the McComb date and then entered Texas for another eleven towns but included none of the larger cities. On 25 October it played Roswell, New Mexico, and continued in that state for a week.

Although there were rumors that the show would not winter in California, it did continue to move west through Arizona and into the Golden State where it ended the tour at Coachella on 7 November. The total mileage for the year was 20,463. The Barnes' Show spent the winter months at Barnes City, California.



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John Robinson Circus

Season of 1927

PART TWO

by Joseph T. Bradbury

Fortunately, we have a splendid eyewitness account by a prominent circus fan, Clint Beery, who spent his two week vacation on the John Robinson Circus while it was in Virginia. Beery, a sales engineer with the Kewanee Boiler Corporation in Chicago, wrote a splendid article illustrated with numerous photographs which was published in *The Aerologist*, Kewanee's house organ, November-December 1927 and January 1928 issues. Beery describes in detail his rail journey from Chicago by way of Washington, D.C. and on to Fredricksburg, Virginia where John Robinson was playing on Saturday, August 6. In addition to describing his circus experiences he mentions his sight seeing expeditions along the route. The article's layout is in the form of a daily diary and we will run circus fan Clint Beery's story in his own words, however parts not directly concerned with the circus itself or unimportant details will be edited for space considerations. He begins his John Robinson odyssey by arriving on the show lot in Fredricksburg, Virginia, Saturday, August 6, 1927.

"At the lot I receive cordial welcome. The first man I meet is Mr. W. H. Thompson, assistant manager. It is about time for the doors to open. Another pleasure awaits me. Marshall T. King, National President of the Circus Fans Association, will be at the afternoon matinee. Mr. King and wife from Washington, D.C., William T. Shook and son-in-law from Frederick, Md. Jake Tyree of Lynchburg, Va. (who is also on the show for a few days), and the author are spending the afternoon together, greatly enjoying the performance.

"After which Mr. Dill, my host, presents me with 'the key to the center pole,' also extends to me the freedom of the circus and what is

mighty important, introduces me to the management of the cook house. We have supper together, after which I spent the rest of the day visiting with circus friends.

"After the night show I am riding a truck to the trains. I find Mrs. Dill in car 60 and surely appreciated her cordial welcome. She gave me the key to a private stateroom, telling me that is to be my home as long as I am with the show. So I get my grips and proceed to make myself at home, thoroughly contented as tonight I will again ride a circus train.

"A run of fifty-three miles to Richmond. Eleven-thirty P.M. The trains will not be loaded for another hour, so I will tell you a few things about the John Robinson Circus. [the author then outlines the general history of the show from the original John Robinson on through the sale to Jerry Mugivan and Bert Bowers and to the present day of the American Circus Corporation.]

"The John Robinson Show is managed by Mr. Sam B. Dill, graduate of the University of Indiana. Likewise three members of his staff are university men: Will R. Hayes, legal adjuster, Iowa State, Law; Theo Forstall, treasurer, Lehigh University, Business Economics; Mr. Duke Mills, manager of the side show, Western Dental, Kansas City—something quite unique in circus history, four staff officials being university men.

"The John Robinson big top seats approximately 7,000 people and requires four and one-half acres of ground for proper arrangement of the various tents. There are 550 people with the show which requires seven standard Pullman cars converted into circus sleepers to transport them. [Author's note. Beery's count of 7 coaches agrees with Potter's count at Benton Harbor.] The mobile property is loaded into wagons, four, six, and

Different view of Theodore Schroeder and his wife with tiger cubs in the John Robinson open air menagerie, season of 1927. Pfening Archives.



eight horse teams moving them off the lots to the hard roads and streets where several are hooked together in trains and towed by tractors to the runs where they are loaded onto the flat cars, ready for the railroad to move them to the next town.

"Sunday, August 7—It is just daylight and we are pulling into Richmond. Another city with many historic attractions. Breakfast over.

"Have lunch at the grounds—it is two P.M. A car is waiting for us. Capt. and Mrs. Schroeder, Slivers Johnson and wife, and the writer are off to visit historic and other places of interest. [Beery then describes many of the sights of the former capital of the Confederacy.]

"Richmond, Va., Monday, August 8, 11 A.M. On the lot, the tents are up, everything is ready for the afternoon crowds. Two hours before the doors open, so I will introduce to you some of the show folks.

"Capt. Theodore Schroeder, head trainer, who works an act with eight polar bears, also an act with eight Bengal tigers. His problem is to keep them in good condition physically and temperamentally. To know Capt. Schroeder and his work is to realize the significance of the words, 'efficiency, reliability and loyalty.' He certainly knows animal psychology. A kind person and a charming friend.

"Miss Ione Carl (star) handles eight large male lions in a most remarkable manner, also does a wrestling act with a full-grown Bengal tiger—absolutely fearless, adds tone wherever she appears, a cheerful worker, a delightful friend, and destined for great things in the circus world.

"Bob Thornton, equestrian director, a schoolmaster to thoroughbred horses in winter and skillful director of the performance during the show.

"Carlos Correion, in charge of the Wild West, or after-show, horse trainer extraordinary.

"Wade Zumwalt, director of the band, whose musical programs add tremendously to the enjoyment of the performance. He puts meaning in the word industry.

"Dinner over, I am chatting with George Tardy, who takes care of the two giraffes, John and Mary. In the front of one of the giraffe wagons I carry my camera and excess baggage. 1:00 o'clock, and Leonard Karsh at the front door calls, 'Doors. Coming in. Coming in.' I'll walk out through the big top to the back yard. Here comes Bob Hickey, press agent, with him are guests.

"I have the pleasure of meeting Bishop and Mrs. Carter Wormeley, publicity director for the State of Virginia, and Colonel Peter Saunders, private secretary to Governor Byrd of Virginia. They wish to meet some show folks. I call Miss Carl from the dressing room and shoot a picture of her with our guests which is used in the Richmond papers that evening under the heading, 'They Meet A Circus Queen.' . . . Supper over I am having a delightful chat with Bert Noyes, in charge of the elephants. Bert used to have the elephants on the Gollmar Show, when we were both much younger. We have many mutual acquaintances and fan over old times in the Ringling and Gollmar winter quarters at Baraboo, Wis.

"Ernie Tucker joins us. He, like myself, is a Baraboo boy, and has charge of the concessions with the John Robinson show. We have many things in common about the old home town. His wife, Madame Lorette, works one of the herds of elephants, assisted by Bert Noyes. She also does a clever iron jaw act. It is truly interesting how men and women work together, each doing his bit, each meeting responsibility in fair weather or foul on an equal basis.

"It is time for the evening performance. Colonel Peter Saunders is back with a party of friends for the evening show. 11:00 P.M., aboard car 60. A run of 75 miles tonight, tomorrow Newport News.

"Newport News, Virginia, August 9. A small lot here—things will be a bit crowded. The roof of a large building across the street offers opportunity for a good picture of the show being erected. Taking it easy today. Norfolk tomorrow. The sleeping cars are being ferried across the James River where it enters Chesapeake Bay. There will be a boat at 10:30 and a special boat for the balance of the show folks will leave for Norfolk at 1:30.

"Captain and Mrs. Schroeder and myself and Slivers Johnson and wife (Schroeder's daughter and son-in-law) are going to try and catch the 10:30 boat. Downtown in Newport News, quite a group of show folks have been waiting fifteen minutes for a street car to the boat landing. In despair, we discover one poor lonely taxicab, and get to the dock just in time. It is a beautiful night, and the water trip, with the folks singing, dancing and everybody in a happy mood, makes a delightful trip. Land at Norfolk. A five or six mile trolley ride and the whole gang is in a lunchroom for the inevitable bit before going to bed.

"Norfolk, Virginia, August 10. Good business here, like Newport News, the lot is rather crowded. Everything goes on schedule—the trains are loaded on time for an 82 mile run to Petersburg.

"Petersburg, Virginia, August 12. Another small lot, low and rolling. Mr. Thompson, assistant manager returns to the show today from Richmond (his home town), where he remained a couple of days with relatives. Chatting with the Chief of Police on the show grounds, he tells me at 11:00 o'clock the Sheriff will sell a new Mack truck which was confiscated passing through Petersburg from Florida to Chicago. Horrors. I don't know what they found in the truck. The Chief tells me it will be sold at public auction from the Court House steps. Perhaps Mr. Dill might be interested in bidding. So the Chief and I commandeered an automobile and go to the trains for Mr. Dill, who accompanies me to the sale. There is a crowd of curious people around the truck. Mr. Dill and I look it over, but can't smell anything. The bidding begins, and they get a very good price for it. The truck, I mean.

"2:30 P.M. The afternoon show is on. Charlie Underwood, press agent, brings two young ladies out of the back yard (The space curtained off with side wall connecting the entrance used by the performers and the dressing room to one end of the menagerie tent, providing private space where performers and show folks can practice, assemble acts, or await their cue.) The young ladies wish to in-

terview some show folks and get material for a little story. One of the girls confides to me that she would like to have her picture taken mounted on an elephant. I appeal to Bert Noyes, who, in his usual pleasing way, brings out an elephant and makes it kneel, so the young lady can get on its back, the other sister operates the Kodak. Both are pretty much excited, the young lady with the Kodak asks my assistance. I take her Kodak to set it for a picture, but discover she has turned her film entirely by. I give her back the blank camera and tell her when they're all set, to press the lever. Ready, go. Say, they never realized how big an elephant was until today and I suppose the girls are still wondering why they didn't get a picture.

"Evening again. Doors open, seats are well filled up. I am standing by one of the rings with Mr. Thompson. Here I want to give a glimpse of team work, brevity, efficiency. Mr. Thompson turns and calls, 'Hey, Chapin.' Mr. Chapin, who has charge of the ushers comes running down the hippodrome. Mr. Thompson shouts to him, 'Children, seats, long run, gonta sail.' This doesn't mean much to the layman, but Chapin got it. 'Get the children and people off the track and on to the seats. We've got a long run tonight and we're going to start the show promptly on time.'



Elephant act being rehearsed on the John Robinson lot, season of 1927. Pfening Archives.

"Back to car 60. Some of the folks are sitting on the edge of their berths; others are outside the car entertaining with portable phonographs. I am chatting with Mr. and Mrs. Phillip Eddy, who do a very clever tight-wire act. Mrs. Eddy says, 'Mr. Beery, would you be interested in our scrap book?' Of course, I answer yes. One thing of interest to me was the foreign press notices from the following places where the Eddy's wire act has been shown. Here they are: Australia, New Zealand, Manila, Hong Kong, Shanghai, Java, Calcutta, Germany, France, Spain, England, Portugal, Bolivia, Burma, Borneo, South Africa, Cuba, Mexico, and the U.S.

"Time for bed. Mr. Eddy and I are going forward to the Privilege car for a cup of coffee and sandwich. Sitting at a table, we discuss various subjects; before I realize it, it's 3:00

A.M. We start back to car 60, but have to pass through two other sleepers, as the train is under way, rolling along at a nice clip. The first door we come to is locked; with the roar of the train our efforts to attract attention are discouraging. Looks like we'd have to sit in the Privilege car or stand on the platform all night. Luck is with us. Wade Zumwalt sticks his head out of his berth, rubs his eyes, unlatches the door. Saved. Oh Boy. 122 miles to Lynchburg, Va.

"Lynchburg, Virginia, August 12. This is circus fan Jake Tyree's home. He also has been a guest with the show several days, but will leave today.

"On the lot Mr. Dill asks me to assist in entertaining a group of 65 guests from the Elks National Home at Bedford, Va., nearby. They will be guests of the show this afternoon. Also there will be about 215 orphans from a local institution. . . . Lon Williams, old time circus agent and former agent of the John Robinson Circus, came over from the Home. He will go over with us tonight to Roanoke, a guest of Mr. Dill and Duke Mills, manager of the side show.

"It is a revelation the way this show provides happiness for the old people and the orphans along their route. There is scarcely a day that a considerable number of reserved

seats are not kept available for the young and the old, the helpless ones to whom not much pleasure comes. The show folks will tell you that their reward is the knowledge they are making unfortunate people happy.

"Good business here. The trains are loaded; we are on our way to Roanoke—53 miles.

"Roanoke, Virginia, August 12. This is a hilly country—and an interesting town. Showing on the fair grounds. A quarter of a mile away is the base of a high mountain, a beautiful picture.

"The show is over. I am sitting in the back yard chatting with Mrs. Schroeder. Elizabeth Rooney approaches with a pair of new crutches under her arm. Her husband, Carl Romig, attempted to ride the horse she uses for her principal act. The horse doesn't take kindly to any other rider than her. The result is two broken bones in Carl's ankle. His foot and ankle are in a plaster cast. . . . Carl will sit with me tonight on the seats and watch the show—a privilege which comes but rarely to a per-

former. We are slipping away before the crowd goes as Carl does not find crutches a satisfactory means of locomotion. As we hobble across the lot, the moon is coming up over the mountain, making a wonderful sight—43 miles tonight, East Radford, Va. Sunday.

"Each day I have spent some time with Mr. Dill, my host, and have come to have a great admiration for him and an appreciation of what it means to manage a big circus. He has the responsibility of the investment, the responsibility to the public, and the responsibility for the comfort and welfare of his people. His days are long, and he seems to be just everywhere. One of the colored workmen says, 'He's the walkinest man I ever saw.' With all his responsibility I have never heard him raise his voice above conversational tone. . . Any manager must be capable of big things, and here is one who has the time for a kind word and ample acts of kindness. A general feeling pervades the show that everything is bound to be all right when Mr. Dill is around.

"East Radford, Virginia, Sunday, August 14. The side show, menagerie, dressing room, cook house, horse tent are all up. The big top is never put up on Sunday. Mr. Dill and I stroll across the lot and seat ourselves on the pole of a baggage wagon for a little private chat. I inquire what the annual property loss in

Beery threw this in for consumption by the largely non-circus public who would read his article.] [Note. A number of other good Sam Dill stories were related in the article which unfortunately space doesn't permit to be printed here.]

"Sunday evening, about Car 60. Chatting with Mr. and Mrs. Dill in their cozy apartment. I have finally succeeded in getting Mrs. Dill to talk to me about herself. Nettie Dill made herself famous as a rider that learned her profession with one of the most honored families in circus history. Members of the McCree Davenport family of riders became attracted to her in a certain Indiana convent, adopted her as a baby, and she grew up with the circus as a member of this honored family. Mr. and Mrs. Dill have been married about ten years now, and she is making as great a success as the wife of a circus manager as she did as a circus star.

"East Radford, Va., Monday noon, August 15. This is a small town, but excursion trains are bringing them in. There is an immense crowd on the lot when the doors open. The night show is over; the last wagons are leaving the lot. Mr. Dill and I are on our way to the trains. Forty-three miles tonight. Marion, Va., tomorrow.

"Marion, Va., August 16. We are in the

"The tent is filled with happy people. It is time for the performance to begin. The band have on their costumes used in the spectacle, and are in formation. The music starts. Little Mary McKeone (Peter Pan) and white collie dog are asleep on their bench in the arena. The fairy ballet are circling around Peter Pan. The King has come and after him elephants, camels, ponies, zulus, and strange weird people, princes and fair maidens. Miss Allen is singing for Peter Pan. All the strange beasts and beautiful people in rich trappings are kneeling a courtesy to Peter Pan. Then comes the tinkling of cymbals and weird chant, an effort to awaken her. Now the riot of color and beauty dissolves. The music changes. The flying Kelleys and Monroes are way up on their trapezes ready to entertain you. Two troupes of educated ponies, with Miss Thornton and Miss Biron in charge, are beginning their act. The Kelleys have finished and give us a pleasant nod as they pass out.

"Captain Schroeder, with his eight polar bears, is entertaining in the steel arena. I often wonder how he keeps them so clean and well groomed. They are forming a beautiful pyramid. A little old gentleman with grey hair, whom I have not heard speak a word since I have been with the show, is sitting on a stool by the steel arena. He is opening an iron gate with a hooked rod, and Captain Schroeder is hustling the bears out.

"Everything is in readiness again, and in comes Bert Noyes with an elephant. Into the steel arena they go, and Margaret Thompson salutes the audience from the arena. Captain Schroeder raises his hand, the iron gate opens, and in comes a big Bengal tiger. Miss Thompson cracks her whip, and up he goes on a pedestal. One more leap and he is on the elephant's back. Around they go, and the tiger is giving a fine demonstration of agility as he leaps through the hoop of fire from perch to pedestal and to his mount again. Bob Thornton is standing near, looks around with a smile, blows a whistle, and quick as a flash, Wade Zumwalt catches the cue, and the music changes.

"Mr. Dickson has taken his place on the ring curb to make announcement, 'Miss Lone Carl will give a special exhibition, wrestling a full-grown Bengal tiger in the steel arena.' Miss Carl waves a greeting and enters the arena. Captain Schroeder raises his hand, the iron gate opens, and Kitty, a beautiful beast, leaps forth. Miss Carl, with a flying tackle, has Kitty around the neck. They're down; they're up again. Miss Carl is talking to Kitty. The whistle blows, and Kitty is through for the day and on her way back to her cage.

"Elizabeth Rooney and Mrs. Correia are entertaining us with a principal riding act.

"Glancing around, Captain Schroeder is standing back of the steel arena. The gate opens and in comes a troop of eight Bengal tigers. What a pretty picture as they come bounding in. Captain Schroeder is with them now. How quickly they take their places.

"The Liberty ponies are entering. Bob Thornton and Rudy are putting them through their paces. Each one wears a number. They have been mixed up in a confusing manner; and while they find their places, the band is getting one minute of rest.



John Robinson's Concert Band, Wade Zumwalt, Director, season of 1927. Zumwalt is immediately behind the bass drum in center and R. Louis Sanderson, air calliope player, stands just to left of the calliope. Clint Beery photo in the Pfening Archives.

equipment left behind on the lot amounts to. He replies that it does not exceed \$10.00 or \$15.00 Here is a study in system. Over three hundred thousand dollars in mobile property, a complete cycle of operation every twenty-four hours—loading, unloading, setting up, taking down in the dark and re-loading 180 times a season, with a loss of only \$15.00.

"He calls attention to the wagon we are sitting on, No. 69, and inquires, 'Do you know what that means?' When wagon 69 is being hauled to the train it must not approach too close to the runs until they are ready to receive it. The trainmaster can call to the driver, asking what he has, and from out of the darkness comes the answer, 'Number 69.' The trainmaster knows that No. 69 is 15 feet long, 6 and 9 equalling 15, and appropriates it to a 15-foot space on the flats—another bit of system. [Author's note. I ain't so sure that ole "Silent Sam" Dill didn't pull Fan Beery's leg just a bit on that one, but maybe not, since Beery had been around circuses all his life. Could be Mr.

mountains now. This is a small but beautiful town. About a mile and a half to the lot here, straight up. The tents are crowded with people from the hills, and they are very interesting. It is time for the night show. As usual, I accept Mr. Zumwalt's hospitality to occupy his chair while he stands and directs the music. Would you like to sit with me this evening and see the show? All right, come on. [Author's note. Although we have already run the *Billboard's* official review of the performance we cannot resist letting circus fan Clint Beery tell it in his own words even if it is somewhat lengthy. Fortunately he does give some additional details on the performance including the opening spec.]



John Robinson loaded flat cars at Logansport, Indiana, July 8, 1927. Note the variety of cages carried by the show that season. At extreme right is the hippo den

with statue carvings on the corners. Next to it is the octagonal shaped monkey cage. Note the two open polar bear dens which are of very plain appearance. The flat cars were

those used by the show just prior to receiving new Mt. Vernon built flats the next season. Chalmer Condon photo in the Joe Bradbury Collection.

"Mr. Dixon is making an announcement. 'Miss Carl with her eight black-maned lions.' Captain Schroeder raises his hand again; the iron gate opens, and they are in the arena arguing with each other. Miss Carl passes the arena to greet her audience. As she passes, Judy makes a leap at her and is seconded by several of his mates. Evidently Judy remembers how he wounded Miss Carl's hand a couple weeks back. Somehow, I can't help wishing he would behave himself. With a smile, she enters the arena, and what a change takes place. Judy is hurrying to his perch. So are Caesar, Ben, Jimmie, Prince, and the rest of them. They seem much braver when she is outside. Now she has them in a fine pyramid. Wish we could get a picture of that. My, but she's working them fast tonight. She has them all lying down now but Judy, darn him. He's a stubborn brute, and mean. Now he's partly down, but he has knocked the chair out of her hand. Wonder how she's going to get it? She's got it and now they are all down. I feel relieved. They're up again; over the hurdles they go; the iron gate opens, and they're gone for the night.

"Now we'll watch the Rudynoff & Correia Comedy Riding. Two fine acts, and I'll keep still so you can enjoy them. The property men are working fast to get the steel arena out of the way and prepare for the Eugeenes. Even the property men are keeping time with the music as they take down and pack or rearrange props. They tell a story about a giant colored property man who used to pick up a 250-pound pedestal and trot out with it, with apparent ease. One night the program was changed from fast, lively music to a slow refrain. The huge property man dropped the pedestal, saying, 'Hell, I can't carry it with that kind of music.'

"Now we'll enjoy the Eugeenes as they fly from bar to bar. Listen to the laughter of the crowd at the closing of this act.

"The Eddys are coming in for their tight-wire act. They are leaving Barbara, their nine-year-old daughter, with us until they finish. Miss Rooney in one ring, the Eddys in the center, and Tetu Robinson on the slack wire. The main part of the act is over, and Phillip Eddy is preparing for a back somersault on the wire. I know by the happy shouts and hand clapping they have finished. Barbara on my knee is playing 'possum' to made daddy and mother think she was asleep and not in-

terested in their performance. She awakens with a laugh and they're off, smiling—through for the day.

"The Menage act is on. The horses and their fair riders are stationed all the way around on the track. Note the way they go through the various stunts. The remarkable dancing horses keeping time with all four feet. Have you ever seen anything more perfect? Miss Etta Carreon surely knows her horses, and have you ever seen a more graceful rider than Miss Thornton? Carlos Carreon is standing nearby watching every movement and studying to detect any possible break in their gait and opportunity for any improvement. I have seen him do this day after day in such an unobtrusive way that one scarcely notices him. They tell a story about Carlos' fidelity—how up in Michigan, when the floods came suddenly just as the show started, the hazards were too great to put on the animal acts; the management was in a dilemma to provide substitute entertainment in an effort to give the people value received. Carlos, who is supposed to work in the after show, came running down the track giving a wonderful demonstration of lariat throwing and acrobatics, rising to the occasion and demonstrating again the performer's code, 'carry on.' And so it goes—two hours of solid, rapid, moving entertainment and music. Every day is bargain day for people who visit the John Robinson show. 64 miles tonight, Bristol, Tenn. tomorrow.

"Bristol, Tenn., August 17. Another small

John Robinson hippo cage, containing Big Victor, coming down the runs at Logansport, Indiana, July 8, 1927. Chalmer Condon photo in the Pfening Archives.



lot, but close to the city and the runs. Good business and everyone well. Mr. B. B. Sullivan of Kingsport, Tenn. where we will show Friday, is our guest for the afternoon. He represents the Kiwanis Club at Kingsport, and some of us will be guests of the Kiwanis Club at Kingsport, Friday. 45 miles to Johnson City.

"Johnson City, Tenn., August 18. A fine lot here close in. Our guest this afternoon is Mr. Carroll King, newspaper man and former theatrical agent. The afternoon show is over. Miss Carl, wearing the leather suit in which she wrestles the tiger, and the author, each with a lion cub about four weeks old, are in a closed car with the cubs crawling over our laps, on our way to the National Sanitarium, where we entertain invalid veterans of the World War. Going through the various wards and giving the boys a chance to see the lions. The McKeone family, acrobats, and George Harmon, midget clown, are out on the lawn entertaining the convalescents, assembled on the porches and balconies. An hour at this wonderful institution with its ten or twelve buildings. We are returning to the lot. The cubs are still crawling over us, but somehow we both feel in a quiet mood, after visiting these poor people, particularly in the wards from which they will never return.

"The night show is over and I am staying on the lot with Mr. Dill. The two portable electric light plants are humming a song of electrical energy. The searchlights are playing across the lot. Workmen are taking down the seats and loading them into the wagons. Two working elephants are pulling the foot of the quarter poles out so that they can be lowered to the ground and loaded on the wagons. Half of the side poles have been removed, and the

big top is about ready to come down. Jack Moore, boss canvasman, is standing by us near the light wagons. Suddenly he shouts, 'Number one.' From the first center pole comes the reply of an attendant, 'Number one,' 'Number two' and the answer back, 'Number two,' 'Number three.' There is a moment of delay. Something here not quite ready. 'Number three,' he calls again. This time the answer comes back, 'Number three,' 'Number four,' 'Number four,' 'Let 'er go,' he shouts. We hear the squeak of pulleys and the swish of rope and down flutters the great canvas, trapping millions of cubic feet of air underneath as the outer rim reaches to the ground before the bale rings at the peak. Huge billows dance up and down in the shadows and look like an angry sea at night. As the air escapes, the waves recede and finally, with a gentle flutter, it lies flat on the ground. Men are swarming over it unlacing the various sections and rolling them into great bundles, which they quickly lace into large bags. Two eight-horse teams with canvas wagons, are approaching, one from either direction. The huge bales are rolled behind the wagon, placed in rope slings, arranged through pulleys in the wagon, a working elephant comes along, is hooked to the rope sling, and walks away in the opposite direction. The canvas rolls up the gate and into the wagon, making a weird picture. The searchlights are sweeping over the lot. Here and there small groups of men are pulling a few scattered stakes. I see a row of men in the far end of the lot lined up in company front fashion, each with a lantern in his hand. They are combing the lot for stray property. The last canvas bag is in the wagon. The big poles are loaded; the teams are pulling them off to the roadways. The two working elephants have completed their labor; their keepers mounted on their heads, with chains clinking, are going down the road side by side. They seem in a hurry to get home to the cars. As they pass a forest of pine trees, and under the road lights, they make a grotesque and weird picture. 25 miles tonight to Kingsport, Tenn. Good night.

"Kingsport, Tenn., August 19. This is a comparatively new city—about 10 years old and laid out for future growth. A good lot close to town. The crowds are already in the city. It is 11:00 o'clock, and the automobiles are here to take our party for a ride around the city, after which we attend a Kiwanis luncheon.



I have the honor of addressing the Kiwanis members—about eighty in all, subject, 'The John Robinson Circus.' It is a pleasure to look over these representative business men and compare them with my friends of the show. I cannot refrain from commenting that I could not tell which was which, they looked very much alike—human, intelligent, interesting, the kind from which to pick good friends. Commenting upon each, the following are introduced to the local Kiwanians; Miss Ione Carl, Captain and Mrs. Theodore Schroeder, Phillip and Caroline Eddy, Bob Thornton, Wade Zumwalt, and Miss Irene Allen, who entertains with song. Several Kiwanis committeemen are our guests this afternoon. This evening I recognize many I met at the pleasant luncheon this noon. 73 miles tonight—Norton, Virginia, tomorrow.

"Norton, Va., August 20. We are in a narrow valley high up in the mountains. The railroad yards on one side of the valley and the business section on the other, fronted by a concrete roadway. A mountain stream crosses the lot between the menagerie and big top, which are arranged end to end today. The lion, tiger, and bear cages are out in the open along the roadway, where the animals can be shifted to the arena. The sky is overcast and we have rain most of the day. The first serious rain we have had since I have been with the show. The lot is low and it will require some extra effort to get the show back on the trains. 102 miles tonight. Sunday in Bluefield, W. Va.

"Bluefield, W. Va., Sunday, August 21. We spend considerable time today with Mr. H. I. Schott and his son, owners of the Bluefield Daily News and Telegraph, who are friends of the show. The show is on the fair grounds about two and a half miles from town, and a very beautiful locality.

"August 22. Charlie Underwood, press agent and I are in the Bluefield Daily Telegraph office to meet the group who will be guests of the show today. Mayor Henry Callaway of Bluefield, through the local newspaper, has organized the 'John Robinson Fifty-year Club.' All residents of Bluefield and the surrounding country who saw the John

Unloading John Robinson stock cars at Logansport, Indiana, July 8, 1927. Note ring horses at right and hitch of hybrids (cross horse-zebra) in left foreground. Chalmer Condon photo in the Pfening Archives.

Robinson Show 50 or more years ago are to meet at the newspaper office. Transportation will be provided, and they will be our guests this afternoon. I spend an hour listening to many interesting stories of the old days. When we count noses and give them badges, we find seventy-five men and women assembled in front of the newspaper office for a photograph, after which we are off to the show grounds. I am accompanied by one of the oldest of the party, Miss Elizabeth Givens, age, 92 years—who saw the John Robinson Circus 80 years ago when she was a child of twelve. Her nephew has brought her and we will get her into the tent and comfortable before the main crowd arrive. They are an interesting group. I wish you could see and hear them as they enjoy the show. Seven or eight are trying to tell me a story at once, and I am trying to listen to all of them.

"Well, this is my last day with the circus. This evening I will leave for home and familiar scenes. Between shows and to keep occupied, I will tell you why I like the circus.

"Because it is a world of system, where each detail combines to bring happiness and pleasure to fellow beings. Here you will find true comradeship, where sincerity obtains. It is a world whose people live close to elemental environment. It is here that when the winds threaten and the rains fall, the best—the worthwhile—comes to the surface. The smile becomes a little broader, and the reverence a little deeper. It is a world over which hazard hovers, where, as a flash, men and women meet emergency and the world and they, know just how steadfast is their courage. Here is a place where time effaces all caste among those who are right—where human worth is appraised by more unerring means than evening clothes or workman's blouse, and fortunate are those who are found worthy of friendship in its fraternity.

"The doors are open and I will be gone in a few moments. I am waiting to hear the first strains of music as they start the performance. Dear old John Robinson Circus—you who, for a 100 years have brought happiness to succeeding generations, you, who though old, yet are eternally impersonated by youth, how I hate to bid you 'goodby.' I am not going back to the dressing room—nor even to the menagerie. As I slip away, the boys out front know that I am going. Gee, it's dark outside. The End."

And thus Clint Beery's superb account is ended. The entire article was "new" to me and I read it for the first time while researching this piece. It was soul rendering and for those of us who can recall the days of the large under canvas railroad circus it would have been comparable to a visit to the abode of Saint Peter to have spent a John Robinson vacation such as did Beery. Even though Beery was not a professional writer, in my humble opinion he grasped and transmitted in print the true picture of the American circus of his day in a manner only slightly subordinate to Bev Kelly's (who was a professional) *National Geographic* masterpiece.

The September 3, 1927 *Billboard* carried additional details about the 50 Year John Robinson Club's celebration in Bluefield, West Virginia. The story noted special street car



Very early morning on the John Robinson lot at Logansport, Indiana, July 8, 1927. Wagons are moving on the lot in background

transportation was arranged for the guests and in addition to seeing the performance they also visited the sideshow and attended a special concert arranged for them. Everything was free, courtesy of the show. Unfortunately, an untimely storm prevented the proposed dinner in the dining tent. The entire promotion stunt was a huge success, so much that it became a part of the show's publicity. Fifty year clubs were arranged wherever practical and became a standard John Robinson promotion as long as the show remained on the road. Mayor Calloway of Bluefield took credit for the idea of the club. Regardless of whose brain gave birth to the idea it proved to have been a most profitable one for the John Robinson Circus and reams of publicity were reaped.

In the Pfening Archives are several interesting financial documents from the official John Robinson files, many coincidentally from the month of August 1927 when Beery was on the show.

One document is a comparison of the cost of the cook house for the month of August, 1927, of the John Robinson and Sells-Floto circuses. John Robinson's total cost was \$8,118.56 or \$300.69 per day while Sells-Floto was \$11,263.13 or \$417.15 per day. An interesting cost item was that for salaries with John Robinson spending \$1,016.70 with Sells-Floto paying out \$1,074.75, which indicated that even though Sells-Floto was feeding more daily (although no official figures are given in that regard) the number of personnel to operate the cookhouse was essentially the same for both shows.

The manager's daily statement was an important document as it recorded a complete picture of attendance at the afternoon and evening performances. Also covered was attendance for the afternoon and evening concert (after show), and annex (sideshow). The document which was preprinted in advance listed every type of ticket sold and location of the sale, whether it be the No. 1 wagon, No. 2 wagon, uptown, or door cash. Columns were separate for hard and soft wholes (adults) and halves (children). The show manager would pencil in first the number of tickets sold in one column with price of same in an adjacent column and the figures were then multiplied and

and being unloaded in left foreground. Chalmer Condon photo in the Pfening Archives.

placed in a third column which represented the monetary take. There was also a fourth column to record war tax. It might be interesting to know that in 1927, some 9 years later, Uncle Sam was still getting his share from an amusement tax put into effect at the beginning of World War I.

The total show receipts for Marion, Va., August 16 were \$4,962.89. For Bristol, Va., August 17, it was \$5,812.98, and for Johnson City, Tenn., August 18, the take was \$5,776.22.

Actually the manager's daily statement is a document 12 inches long by 5½ wide. Below the section for show receipts is another section to record monies taken in from all concessions, banners, and other miscellaneous items of revenue. This section is not filled in on the documents we examined, but the show did keep a complete record of all receipts as well as expenditures and kept a final daily balance of funds on hand.

There is another document we examined. This is also a comparison for the month of August 1927 of John Robinson and Sells-Floto. It is based on 27 show days for both circuses. The document lists the costs of the big show, concert, and side show, all separated. A cost per day is thus arrived at which is deducted from the average receipts of the shows per day (obviously taken from another document) to get a final gain per day. The result is somewhat surprising. John Robinson's big show cost was \$92,898.51 against

John Robinson open air menagerie, season of 1927. Pfening Archives.



Sells-Floto's \$121,697.96. Of the individual costs Sells-Floto spent considerably more on its advance, \$39,384.10, while John Robinson spent \$21,903.57. This can be partially explained by pointing out that Sells-Floto ordinarily played larger cities than John Robinson and it naturally took more billing paper etc. to cover the area. Also the larger city newspapers charged more for advertising than did the smaller town journals. For concert salaries Sells-Floto paid a third more than John Robinson, forking over \$1,365.40 against \$1,000.00. Also the Sells-Floto sideshow people drew more, \$3,169.00 while the Robinson attractions got only \$2,078.85.

John Robinson's total cost per day for big show, concert, and sideshow was \$3,621.18, and Sells-Floto was \$4,724.98. However the final, somewhat surprising, figures were these. John Robinson's receipts per daily average were \$5,220.69 which less the daily cost gave the show a gain of \$1,599.51. Sells-Floto receipts were \$5,959.77 daily which after cost left the show a daily gain of \$1,234.79. No doubt John Robinson suffered quite a bit during the early weeks of bad weather but during August the show beat Sells-Floto, considered the American Circus Corporation's premier outfit.

No detailed figures have surfaced indicating salaries paid to John Robinson staffers, performers, or executives in 1927, however in the Pfening Archives is the employees contract of Arthur R. Hopper, general agent, with the John Robinson Shows Co. for the 1927 season. It is dated January 4, 1927 and signed by Hopper as employee and Jerry Mugivan as employer. The contract contains the two pages of general provisions that were customary in those days. Of prime interest is paragraph 3 which describes said services shall in chief consist of:

"To be General Agent of the John Robinson's Circus and to make himself generally useful under the direction of the Management. Salary \$5,000.00 per year paid in weekly remittances of \$96.15 per week until the 52nd week, which time it shall be \$96.35."

Ordinarily the general agent's salary would be among the top executives of the show, with probably only the manager and assistant manager drawing more.

Enroute from West Virginia back towards the Cincinnati area for two more dates in that most popular John Robinson territory the show played Ironton, Ohio on August 24. CHS Member John F. Polacek has recently put together a press book of circus adver-

tisements for shows playing Ironton in the years 1926-1949. Included in the book is the John Robinson stand in 1927. Newspaper ads included one very plain with no cuts which provided the essential information that the show would play Moulton's Field Show Grounds with free parking space provided. John Robinson was advertised as "The Pioneer Circus of the World." "Eternally Young, 104th Edition." City ticket office on circus day was at the Red Cross Drug Store. Other printing on the ad noted an "Augmented Menagerie and the World's Greatest Equestrian Displays." No ticket prices were mentioned. In a large box was the wording, "Best Time to Go Afternoon Show."

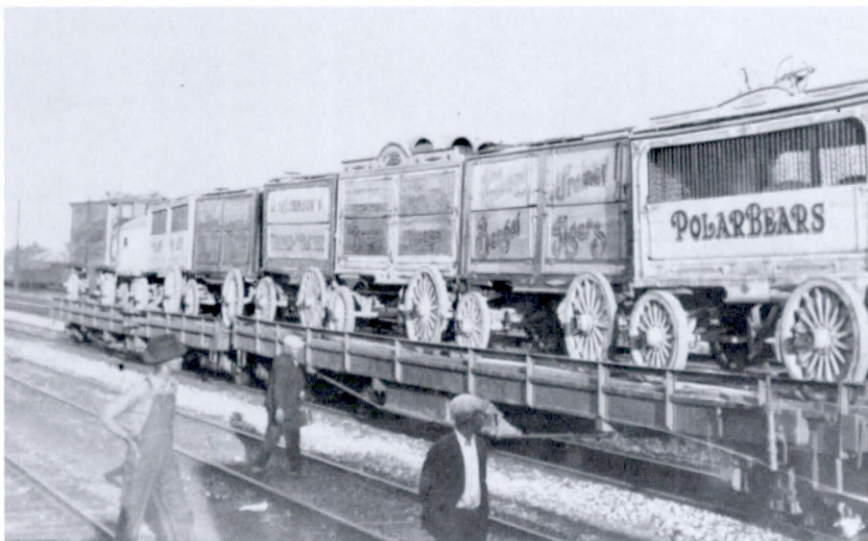
One of the readers provided by the press department pictured three young ladies on horses jumping over a high fence. The supporting text advised that circus enthusiasts would have an opportunity to see the best in circus riding with 35 singing girls and dancing horses appearing in one number, concluding with a series of high jumps.

One large display consisted of individual photos of Carlos and Etta Carreon and the tribe of Sioux Indians who "appear with the John Robinson Circus which will arrive in the city over the N & W railroad from Williamson." One cut showed Karoline Eddy of the Eddy Duo on the back of Big Victor, the hippo. This photo appeared on page 17 of the November-December 1985 *Bandwagon* which carried the story of the 1926 John Robinson show. There were other photos with short texts of Margaret Thompson perched on an elephant doing a hind leg stand, another of the Eddy Duo and their tight wire act which featured a somersault by Phillip Eddy.

An interesting cut pictured Capt. Roy Emerson, the California giant, "who makes a comfortable living due to his great height, but towering high above the giant's head is one of the show's new Abyssian long-necked giraffes." In addition to the giraffes John Robinson's augmented menagerie promised living specimens of animals from all portions of the globe.

Traditional stock cuts used in those days showing a small boy with a pail watering an elephant, a group of clowns, and an unusual view of a tiger playing a saxophone were all part of John Robinson's newspaper publicity for Ironton.

On show day itself there was a large three column headline, "Hundreds See Robinson's Big Circus Unload Today. Big Tent is Up at Eighth and Lawrence Street." The customary box giving timetable for the show days activities was given, 6:15 a.m. arrival, unloading at Front and Walnut, show grounds at Eighth and Lawrence. Doors would open at 1 p.m. for the matinee with performance at 2:15. In the evening doors would open at 7:00 p.m. with performance beginning at 8:15. Final item said the train would leave at midnight for Cincinnati. The lengthy text then described all of the circus day activities and noted that in place of the old-time street parade which had been omitted the gigantic spectacle, "Peter Pan in Fairyland" had been substituted and it goes on to give the usual, that 500 persons and hundreds of horses will take part, featur-



Two flat cars loaded with cages are pictured during the 1927 season of the John Robinson Circus. Circus World Museum Collection.

ing three prima donnas, ballets of girls and a special musical score.

As a special promotion in Ironton, and it is assumed such things were done where it could be arranged by the advance press, the *Ironton Tribune* sponsored an essay contest, not over 150 words, on any animal which was to be found in the John Robinson menagerie. The contest was open to boys and girls, 14 years and younger. The 15 best essays brought a reward of two free tickets to the circus. Those kids who wanted any additional information about animals could come by the *Tribune* office and get a copy of "A Short Lesson in Zoology" issued by the John Robinson Circus which told about all species of beasts, brutes and birds.

Robert Thornton, equestrian director of the Robinson show in 1927, posed for Clint Berry in the backyard of the show. Pfening Archives.



Robinson's return engagement in Cincinnati, August 26-27, saw the show in the Oakley section the first day, after which came a 10 mile run to East End for the second day. The show then took a five mile trip across the Ohio River on a Sunday run to Newport, Kentucky where performances were given on Monday, August 29, to start the nineteenth week. Three more Kentucky stands followed, Maysville, Lexington, and Danville, then the show crossed the river one more time for a final date in Indiana, at New Albany on September 2. The route next carried the show south with a 119 mile run to Bowling Green, Kentucky. Continuing to go southern the Robinson train covered the 73 miles over the L & N Railroad on a Sunday off to Nashville, Tennessee and a big Labor Day stand on Monday, September 5, the first day of the twentieth week.

Two additional Tennessee dates followed, Chattanooga and Knoxville, then the show backtracked into Kentucky for its final stand in that state, Middlesboro, on September 8. It was back in Tennessee at Morristown the next day and on Saturday, 10th, the show went on into North Carolina at Asheville.

Three states saw John Robinson during the twenty-first week. It began with the show in Hendersonville, North Carolina which was followed by a run into South Carolina for Spartanburg and Columbia. On September 15 it was in Augusta, Georgia but the train returned to South Carolina the following day to Greenwood. On Saturday, September 17, the Seaboard Air Line Railroad moved the John Robinson show 67 miles to Athens, Georgia where the author was living at the time, and therein lies a tale.

I saw John Robinson in Athens in both 1928 and 1929 and have fond and clear memories of both visits, but I didn't see it in 1927 and really don't know the reason why. I have two possible explanations. In either case I feel sure I must have been at my grandparents home in Walton County some 18 miles away. My first schooling began in September 1927 when I was enrolled in the first grade of the College Avenue Elementary School in Athens. During the previous summer months I had been with my grandparents in Walton County and each summer's vacation time was spent with them all through the elementary school years. There I had a thousand acre plantation of my grandfather's and his kindly neighbor's five thousand to frolic around on and stay out of city life trouble. There was a river, large creek, and numerous branches to fish in, a couple of dammed up streams providing swimming pools or "washholes" to skinny dip in, or if all of that was boring I could always let my older brother or cousins beat me on the tennis court and the homemade nine hole golf course. (Boy, it was rough out in rural Georgia in those days). But anyway, I'm sure I was at my grandparents and thus missed the John Robinson Circus in 1927. One theory is that our school in Athens started later than most systems on account of the schedule being geared to the local University of Georgia which began classes in mid to late September and possibly the elementary school hadn't started up. Or if it had we must have gone out to Walton County for the weekend as we often did during the school year. But such is life, you caught some great shows growing up, like Sells-Floto with Tom Mix Himself in 1930 but also you missed some goodies like John Robinson in 1927.

After Athens the show made a Sunday run to Atlanta for performances on Monday, September 19, to begin the twenty-second week. Backtracking the next day the show played Gainesville then moved back into South Carolina for Greenville and Union, ventured into North Carolina for Gastonia, and on the final day of the week was in Rock Hill, South Carolina.

The trade publications were again silent on John Robinson activities during September. There was only a short notice in that the show had been booked to exhibit on opening day of the Georgia State Fair in Savannah on October 24.

The show was back in North Carolina at Charlotte on Monday, September 26, the first date of the twenty-third week, and would then play a total of 17 consecutive stands in the Tarheel State. Remaining dates of the week were at Statesville, Winston-Salem, Salisbury, High Point, and Burlington. A short Sunday



Morning setup of the John Robinson Circus on a small lot at Newport News, Virginia, August 9, 1927. Note at extreme right near the top a portion of the old Dode Fisk tableau

run of 34 miles over the Southern Railroad moved the show to Durham which was played on October 3. Rest of the stands in the twenty-fourth week were in Raleigh, Roanoke Rapids, Rocky Mount, Wilson, and Greenville.

In the meantime the October 1, 1927 *Billboard* told of the fire at the show's West Baden quarters which destroyed a number of barns. They were frame buildings and contained much old equipment. Initial estimates placed the loss at \$30,000. Details of this fire have been difficult to obtain as it was not covered extensively in either the local or regional press or in the trade publications. Some years ago when I was doing research for the *Bandwagon*

Clint Berry took this fine photo of lone Carle with one of her tigers during his visit on the Robinson show in 1927. Pfening Archives.



which John Robinson used as the No. 2 bandwagon in parades. The wagon was carried for baggage purposes. Clint Beery photo in the Pfening Archives.

article on the West Baden quarters I made every effort to try and come up with something positive on the fire but was unable to do so. Likewise I never found a photograph of it. Tradition has long held that the fire destroyed two famous old John Robinson parade wagons. One was the former Yankee Robinson steam calliope which was used by Howes Great London in 1921, Gollmar Bros. 1922, and John Robinson in 1923-24-25. Also destroyed was the huge, heavily carved, former Norris & Rowe tableau which had been built by Leonhardt. This one had served as the No. 1 Bandwagon on Howes Great London in 1921, Gollmar Bros. 1922, and John Robinson in 1923-24.

The twenty-fourth week saw John Robinson in Washington, New Bern, Kingston, Goldsboro, and Wilmington, all North Carolina stands, with the final day finding the show in South Carolina at Marion, October 15.

News of the show was still skimpy in the *Billboard*. There was a short piece in the October 29, 1927 issue which said the show had presented two lions to the city of Wilmington, North Carolina where the circus played on October 14. The animals were for the Greenfield Lake Zoo in that city. The gift of the lions was made by Manager Sam B. Dill on behalf of the entire Robinson organization and was accepted by Mayor Walter H. Blair. There was a problem, however. The lions could not be delivered at once because the city had no place to house them, but the assurance of Mr. Dill was given that they would be shipped the moment he was notified that living quarters for the beasts had been provided. The new lion quarters would be built at once.

All South Carolina stands were scheduled for the twenty-sixth week beginning with Charleston, October 17. Other dates were at Florence, Bennettsville, Darlington, Sumter, and Barnwell.

In the Pfening Archives is a letter dated October 18 at Florence, South Carolina addressed to Jerry Mugivan and signed by Sam B.



Dill. The letter read, "Business is awfully bad today. Only have 800 paid admissions this afternoon and it is cold and windy. Ended with \$6,400.00 in Charleston yesterday."

The season was fast coming to an end as the show moved over two railroads, the Southern and Atlantic Coast line on a Sunday some 123 miles out of South Carolina to Savannah, Georgia and its heavily promoted date on Monday, October 24, to open the Georgia State Fair. The *Billboard* gave no details of the stand other than John Robinson was the featured attraction of the fair on opening day. After Savannah other stands during the twenty-seventh week were all in Georgia: Statesboro, Dublin, Hawkinsville, Brunswick, and Waycross. Part of the run from Statesboro to Dublin and all of the move to Hawkinsville was made over a Georgia shortline railroad, the Wrightsville and Tennille. In those days the roadbed was typical roller coaster and on a straight stretch of track if the train was long you could only see from head on, the locomotive, some cars in the middle, and the caboose, as the train moved up and down caterpillar like over the rural countryside. Evidently John Robinson had no difficulty with the move, or at least it wasn't reported. A couple years earlier Fletcher Smith, Christy Bros. colorful *Billboard* correspondence, wrote that on a run over the W&T the Christy folks woke up and found their coaches sitting out in the middle of nowhere. The locomotive couldn't move all of the train at one time and was ferrying cars a few at a time then returning for more until the task was accomplished. The W&T remained as a separate shortline for many years but later was taken over by the Central of Georgia and finally the Southern. (Now Norfolk Southern)

The twenty-eighth and final week of the season started with John Robinson at Thomasville, Ga. on Monday, October 31. In the Pfening Archives is a copy of a letter written that day from the show to Mugivan which is one of those truly important ones which researchers love to find. It reads as follows.

"This is to advise that we have 87 head of baggage horses, 49 head of ring stock, 18 head of ponies, one mule, and 6 hybrids. (Horse-zebra)." This is of course an official count and

Clint Berry took this crowded midway of the John Robinson Circus during his vacation with the Robinson show in 1927. Pfening Archives.

can be considered as positively correct as of that particular date.

After Thomasville the show moved to Albany for performances on November 1. Next came Americas, and on the final day of the 1927 season the show was in Macon, which at the time was the winterquarters of the 20 car Sparks Circus.

In the Pfening Archives is another interesting letter from Dill to Mugivan, also written from Thomasville, Georgia on October 31, 1927. It reads

"First attached herewith you will find a clipping from the Monday morning Macon Telegraph in regard to the Fifty Year Club.

Margerate Thompson, who presented a tiger riding an elephant on Robinson in 1927, posed for Clint Berry in the backyard. Pfening Archives.



"You will also find a clipping from the Americus paper. I am trying to pave the way to beat that city reader [license] in Americus. I sent Mr. Lanier a draft for \$8,000.00 and had him deposit it in the Americus bank. Did not want to carry that money for the final pay off with the show.

"Don't know how business will be here in Thomasville."

What the real story behind all of this is not known to the author but it appears Americus, Georgia must have had a very high license fee, so much so, that the show tried to sweeten up the local city officials to either reduce it or forgive it. It may be remembered that back in the teens Mugivan and Bowers at times had wintered shows in Americus. The clipping from the Americus paper attached to the letter from Mugivan read as follows.

"CIRCUS TO PAY OFF EMPLOYEES IN AMERICUS. Between \$8,000 and \$10,000 Payroll to Be Distributed Among Performers Wednesday Morning.

"Between eight and ten thousand dollars in pay rolls will be paid out in Americus by the John Robinson circus next Wednesday when they arrive here for two performances. This is the show's last pay roll of the season and a local bank has been instructed to have this large sum in \$10 and \$20 bills ready for the paymaster early Monday morning, the arrangements having been made for Sam B. Dill, manager of the show, by Frank Lanier.

"Jerry Mugivan and Bert Bowers have never forgotten Americus," Mr. Lanier said today, "and while their last performance of the season is Thursday at Macon, they are paying off here so that our merchants may secure as much of this cash as they can. Lots of these show people will leave Macon just as quickly as they finish the show and with the money in their pockets here one day before the season ends, the show people likely will want new clothes and things of that sort to go back home in."

"I think if I were a merchant I would let the show people know that I would remain open until their train is ready to leave for Macon, which will be about midnight."

"It is mighty fine for Mr. Dill and Mr. Mugivan and Mr. Bowers to do this for Americus and we all appreciate their courtesy," said Mr. Lanier.

"John Robinson's Circus is an 'old friend' of the community and no doubt there are now in the show many whose faces will be remembered by Americus people, it is said."

That's it. Was it all legit? The author has no way of knowing. With the money actually deposited in the bank in Americus it may be. However, if the final payoff was indeed made a day in advance, it may have included only a select few performers, staffers, bosses etc. If the general run of routabouts, canvas men etc. were paid off in Americus would the show have ever been loaded for Macon, that is after final settlement, payment of holdbacks etc? (Those who have been around circuses any length of time should answer this easily).

Following the final performances in Macon, Georgia on November 3 the show moved over the Southern Railway 680 miles to the West Baden quarters. Total season mileage according to the official route folder was 11,748.



This view of a sideshow opening was taken by Clint Berry during the 1927 Robinson tour. Pfening Archives.

No news came from the West Baden quarters after the show's arrival until mid December. A report dated December 10 told of a battle to death between two polar bears. One animal was killed and the other seriously wounded. "Murphy" a giant Russian polar bear was killed by "Betty" after two hours of desperate struggling. Murphy, weakened, was forcibly drowned in a pool of water in the cage, a show employee was quoted in the *Billboard* article. The animal was valued at \$1,000.

The *White Tops* carried a nice article about activities in West Baden which was dated December 15. It said that all evidences of the disastrous fire which swept winterquarters in September while the show was on the road were now obliterated. The buildings destroyed included the blacksmith and wagon shop, paint shop, wagon sheds, hay storage barn and smaller storage buildings. These have been replaced by more commodious, better arranged buildings. Construction work had been completed, and the new shop machinery was now being installed by the manufacturers' mechanics. All buildings had heavy cement floors and ample window lights. The new machinery would be operated throughout by electric motors.

Egypt Thompson, assistant manager, had a gang of 30 men and several teams busy filling in the ground around the car shop and sidings, raising the track level some four feet and making stone roadways allowing easy access to all storage tracks. Bob Thornton and Carlos Carreon were hard at work in the ring barn. They were breaking a new 12 horse liberty act with cream colored horses, which would give the show three 12 horse acts for one number. Theo Schroder and Capt. Bert Noyes were busy at all times around the animal barn. While actual breaking of new wild animal acts had not been started, daily workouts of the old acts were going on. A recent battle to the death among the polar bears attained wide newspaper publicity. The dead bear, Murphy, had already been replaced. Capt. Noyes had trained one of his elephants to act as caddy on the golf links, not only to carry the clubs as

does a human caddy, but likewise the player, if he feels inclined, could climb on Sadie's head and ride from hole to hole. Among celebrities stopping at the big hotels who have recently tried out the elephant caddy innovation, and have pictures to prove it, were John T. McCutcheon, the *Chicago Tribune* cartoonist, Roscoe (Fatty) Arbuckle and Irene Castle (Mrs. McLaughlin). Miss Castle became very popular with the residents of the elephant barn and the monkey cages as on each daily visit she brought a huge sack of the delicacies relished by these animals.

Earl Bapty, boss props on the road, was for the fourth season the winterquarters purchasing agent and general utility man assisting

Pearl Biron, equestrian, on the John Robinson lot, season of 1927. Clint Beery photo in the Pfening Archives.



Manager Sam B. Dill in many ways. John Eli (Frenchy) had the cookhouse as usual and Theo Forstall was keeping the office typewriter from rusting up in the winter time.

The December 17, 1927 *Billboard* had a rather startling story which was headlined, LOUIS CHASE APPOINTED MANAGER OF ROBINSON SHOW. The article was dated, Chicago, December 10 and said that Louis Chase of Jersey City has been appointed manager of the John Robinson Circus for the coming season. The past season Chase was assistant manager and legal adjuster of the Sells-Floto Circus. Prior to this he was connected with George W. Christy, being manager of his Lee Bros. Show several seasons ago. Chase was connected with the American Circus Corporation.

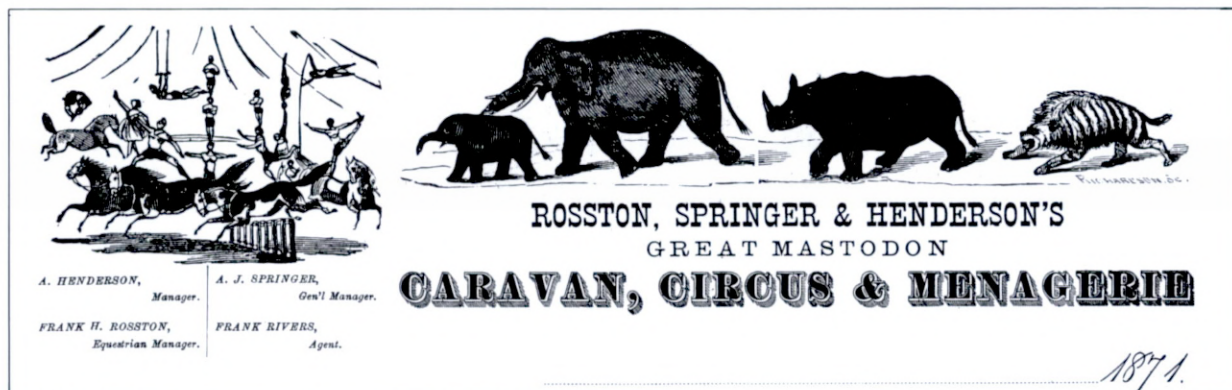
Two weeks later the December 31, 1927 *Billboard* reported that the story printed earlier that Louis Chase was to assume management of the John Robinson Circus was in error, according to officials of the American Circus Corporation at Peru, Indiana. Information was given out that Sam B. Dill would continue, as in seasons gone by, as the manager of the Robinson show.

So as 1927 drew to a close the circus world was under the impression there would be no change in the John Robinson management, however it would not be very long into the new year, before it would be known that the initial report was correct all along, Sam Dill was out as the John Robinson manager and Louis Chase would have that job for the 1928 season. And thus the curtain comes down on the Sam B. Dill seasons as manager for John Robinson. He was an interesting character. It is assumed he got the nickname "Silent Sam" for never having too much to say and when he did talk his voice was never raised above normal conversational tone. Clint Beery remarked on this in his story. Old timers often told "Sam Dill" stories. One of the best I think was one told by the late Bill Woodcock Sr. According to Woodcock, in the early 30's when Dill owned a motorized circus with his own name for the title he carried but one elephant. A fellow showman once asked Silent Sam, "Say Sam you've got only one elephant for such a large show, why don't you have more?" To which Dill replied, "One is enough, they all look alike anyway."

Although Dill was removed as manager of John Robinson he remained with the American Circus Corporation in a subordinate capacity until shortly before it was sold to John Ringling in September 1929. The reason for his demotion is not known to the author.

There will not be an article on the 1928 season as Albert Conover has thoroughly covered it in the May-June 1970 *Bandwagon*. This author will conclude the present John Robinson series with an article on the 1929 season which will appear in *Bandwagon* at a later date. Several 1928 photos will be run in both the 1927 and 1929 articles, as new shots have turned up since Conover's article. Many thanks go to the Circus World Museum, Baraboo, Wisconsin staff for providing a number of photos and also to Don Francis who very kindly researched a number of *Billboard* issues which were missing from the author's files.

BILL KASISKA'S LETTERHEADS



In 1871 Rosston, Springer, Henderson was one of the larger shows on the road. Framed in Philadelphia, the circus appears to have been financed by Adam Forepaugh. George W. Hall was with the show as a talker in the menagerie tent. He later toured his own show. This letter paper was printed in black from a wood block.

I am a serious student, writer, collector, NOT a dealer, of the American Western Film and American Culture from the 1920's to the 1960's. I have undertaken to advertise in THE BAND-WAGON in an attempt to locate items of special interest to myself and to my research. ALL of the below listed items are especially wanted for study. If you have any of the items for which I am looking and are willing to part with them please write or give me a call and I am certain that we will come to a mutual agreement.

If you do not wish to sell, a photograph with description would be almost as important to me for my research. Any and all efforts in helping me would be truly and greatly appreciated.

ITEMS OF INTEREST

- 1) Material on the western stars of movies and television concerning their carnival, circus, theater, and vaudeville appearances including, but not limited to, HOPALONG CASSIDY, GENE AUTRY, ROY ROGERS, TOM MIX, BUCK JONES, LASH LARUE, FUZZY ST. JOHN, GABBY HAYES, TEX RITTER, and many others to include programs, tickets, candid pictures, newspaper articles, and souvenirs such as pennants and badges
- 2) Personal items of the stars including clothes, pictures, interviews, or contact with those still living

3) TOYS of western characters including play outfits, guns, comics, premiums from radio shows and cereals, radios, lamps, games

4) MOVIE MAGAZINES, especially westerns

5) Postcards, Penny Arcade Cards, and Gum Cards of western stars

6) TOYS from the 1920's to the 1950's on radio, comic, and Disney characters, especially RADIO and NEWSPAPER PREMIUMS

7) COMICS of any type (30's to 60's), but especially western

8) PULP MAGAZINES, westerns, horror, character such as SPIDER, SHADOW, western, love. Also original pulp artwork such as cover paintings

Please take the time to search your attics and garages for items that you, your parents or other family members may have had that you think I might be interested in. The memories of those times are quickly fading with those who lived them and without a serious effort on all of our parts they will never be kept alive.

PLEASE WRITE OR CALL
LARRY GRUBB
2202-13 RIVER RUN DR.
SAN DIEGO, CA.
92108
(619) 283-7906

19TH CENTURY ANIMAL BOOKLETS

Starting in the 1830s and continuing until about 1900 menageries and circuses published booklets describing the habits and characteristics of the exotic animals they exhibited. The natural history lesson was often augmented by poetry, propaganda about the show and its owners, information usually found in almanacs, and on occasion ads for patent medicines. The earlier ones were part of the advance advertising as many of them have a town and date hand written on them. By the 1870s some showmen saw the booklets' profit potential and began selling them, presumably in the menagerie. Most of the books were around 6" by 10" in size with as many as 80 pages. All contained

numerous wood block illustrations, some in color. The great bill writers and press agents such as Charles H. Day, W.W. Durand, and William C. Crum edited some of them. When circus programs switched from a newspaper to a magazine format in the early 1900s the animal descriptions, and even the old wood cuts, were incorporated into them.

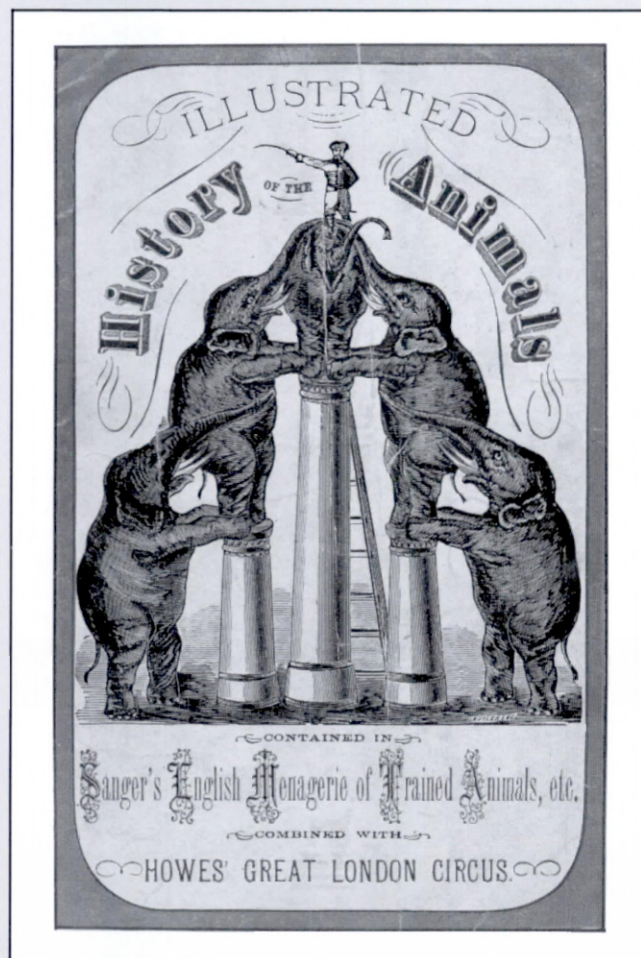
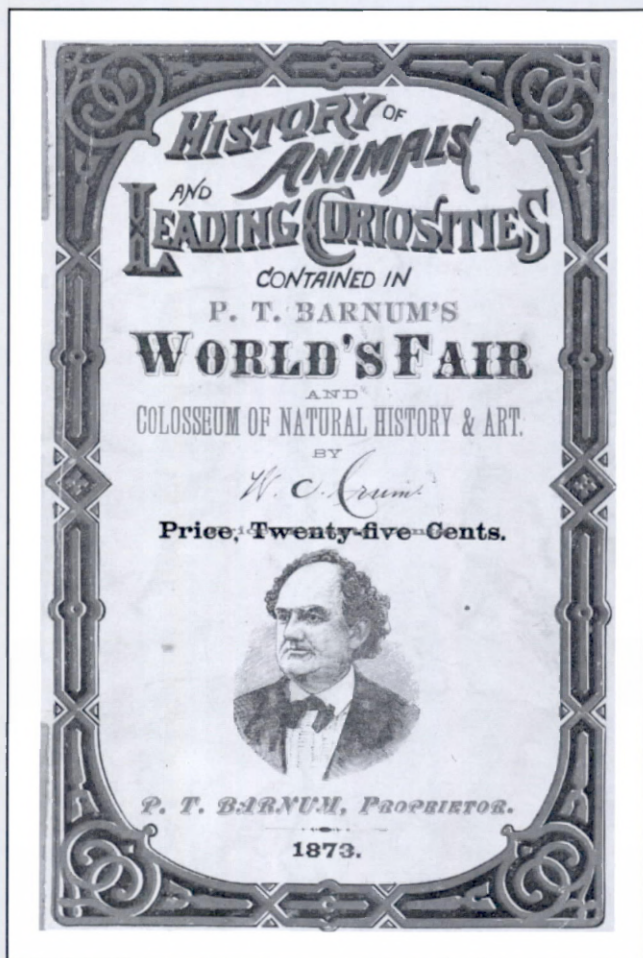
Sometimes a single animal was deemed important enough to merit its own booklet. Rufus Welch printed a newspaper type courier for his giraffes in the 1830s, and in the 1860s George F. Bailey and his partners published a booklet on their hippopotamus. Twenty years later Forepaugh issued a special booklet

on his white elephant as did Barnum on his, and Jumbo created a cottage industry of pamphlets and couriers praising his virtues. The booklet the Ringling-Barnum show used for Gargantua in 1938 was a throw-back to an earlier age.

The booklets are useful to the historian as they often disclose details about major four footed attractions, and they are, of course, quite desirable to collectors. They turn up occasionally at flea markets and on paper dealers' lists. A very fine group from the 1840s and 1850s were sold at auction last year. The examples shown here are from the Pfening archives.

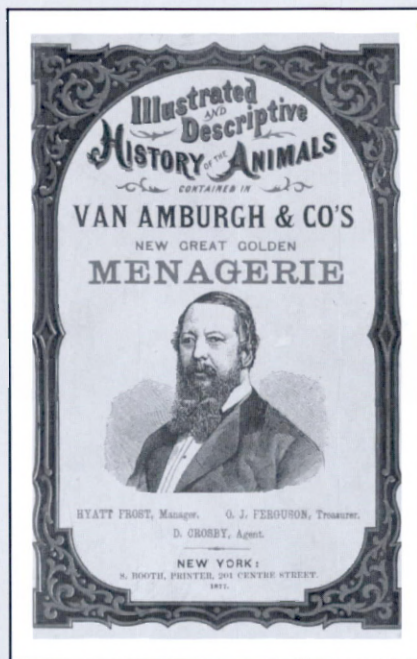
W. C. Crum, the Barnum show's press agent, wrote this 1873 booklet. The 25 cent price has been over-printed 20 cents, an indication that it didn't move at a quarter.

This 1876 example from Howes Great London bragged about the show's elephants and contained the show's program. The latter was rarely published in animal books.

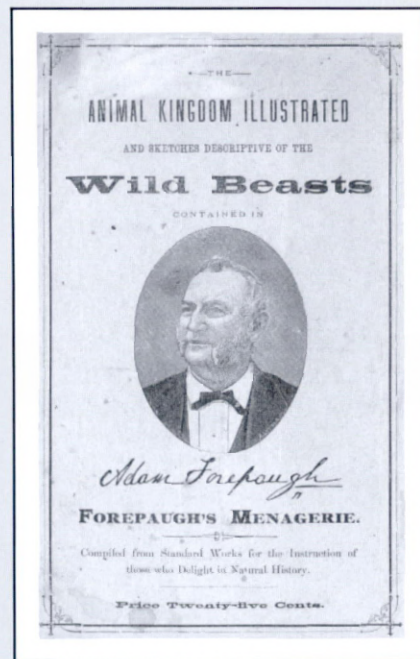




The Great Eastern Circus published this 32 page booklet in the early 1870s. Page one describes the show's balloon ascension.



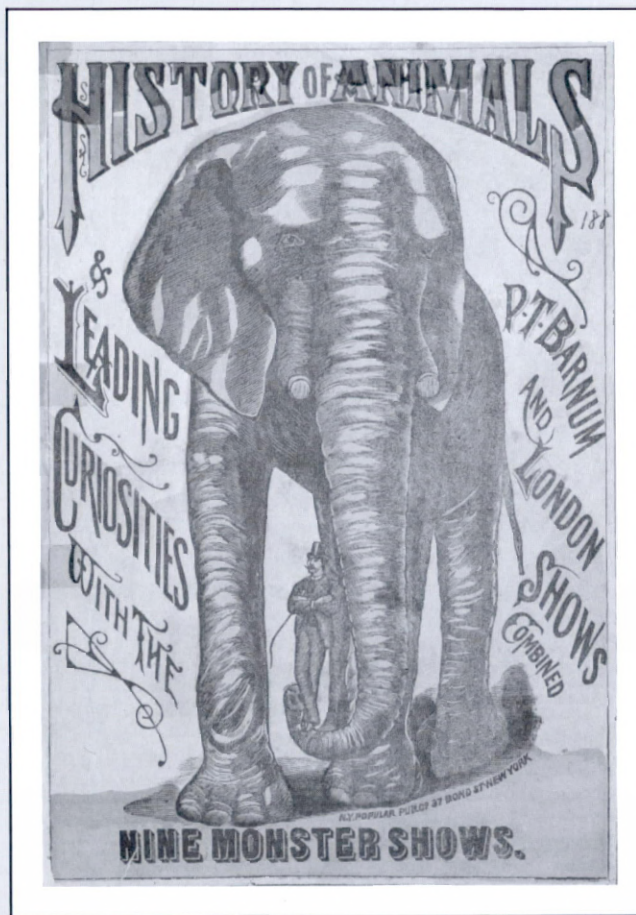
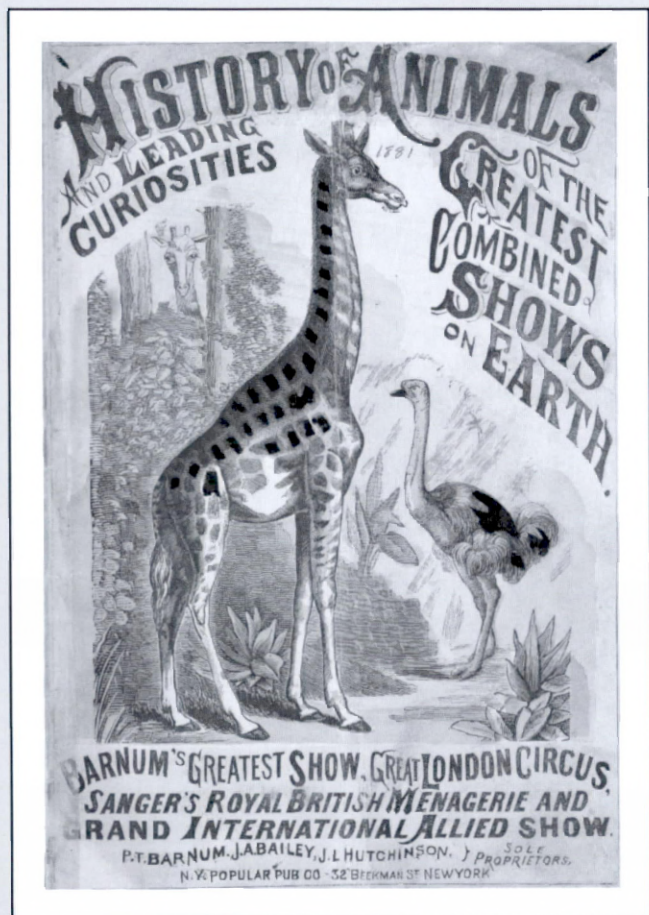
This 1877 Van Amburgh booklet has a lime green cover, and an illustration of its Fielding band chariot on the inside.



When Charles Day put together this booklet for the Forepaugh show in 1882, he included a biography of the owner.

The Barnum and London Circus had color illustrations accompanying the text in their 1881 booklet, the earliest known use of inside color in such a book.

Even though he was killed two years earlier, Jumbo was on the cover of this 1887 Barnum show animal book. The text includes the article "The Life and Death of Jumbo."





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